

An HUMBLE
1608/178.
ADDRESS
TO THE
NOBILITY *and* GENTRY:

BEING,
A PERSWASIVE to a Holy Life,
with a particular View to their Condi-
tion and Circumstances.

By NATHANIEL COLLIER, M. A.



L O N D O N :

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Head in St. Paul's Church-yard. 1721.





T O

Sir Richard Newdigate, Bart.

O F

ARBURY:

In the County of Warwick.

Honour'd SIR,



COULD not be long
in Determining to whom
I should dedicate an Ad-
dress of this Nature,
knowing you to be a Gentleman

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whom

The DEDICATION.

whom I could well propose, as an Example of the Duties therein recommended ; from a thorough Acquaintance with your Religious Conduct, not only in your private Capacity, but in the regular Government of your Family: Of which I may be allow'd a competent Witness, having had the Opportunity to serve you so long as a Minister, during the time of your living at your Seat here, in the daily and constant Use of our most excellent Liturgy, which you so justly prefer, for its Subserviency to true Devotion, not only above any crude and extempore Effusions of Enthusiastick Spirits, but above all private Compositions.

I chuse to mention, Sir, the Regularity of your Family-Devotions, that I may provoke others of your Rank and Quality to an Imitation; passing over those of the Closet, (wherein however I know that neither

The DEDICATION.

ther you nor your good Lady are wanting) because being private they are not so fit to be proclaimed. And as for those other Virtues, which are more particularly insisted on in the following Address; I dare say you'll be better pleas'd that I should exhort you to persevere, than tell the World how exemplary you are therein. If any thing that I have here offer'd shall be of use, to raise your Virtue to a higher pitch, or to point out any Error in your Conduct, (for no man living is perfect) I promise myself *more favour, than if I should flatter with my Tongue;* and so by a strain of Common-place Complements, the usual Style of Dedications, bring in question with such as do *not know* you those Virtues, which those that *know* you observe and love.

THAT the Virtues of both their Parents, (for which end I hope the following Address will hereafter

The DEDICATION.

ter be subservient) may descend
upon your hopefull Issue, and all
the Blessings of this World and
the next upon you All, are the
Prayers of,



S I R,

Your most obliged

Humble Servant

Harefield near Uxbridge,
Sept. 20. 1720.

NATH. COLLIER.



T H E



T H E
P R E F A C E.



THE best Apology I can make for sending the following ADDRESS out into the World, is my sincere Desire to be as usfull as I can ; and the Age is so bad, that I think there cannot be too many Books written to reform it. There are indeed Multitudes of small Tracts published for the Use of the common people : But I don't know that such as are peculiarly adapted to the Condition of the GENTRY, are so numerous ; and yet their Influence is so great upon those below them, that the likeliest way to do good upon such, is by bringing them to a due Sense of Religion ; for which end this ADDRESS is designed. And I have endeavour'd to make it so short as to encourage the reading of it by those, who don't care to confine themselves so long, as is necessary for the perusing of larger Volumes. Of these there are enough of like nature with what I here offer ; and if I can hereby

The P R E F A C E.

hereby perswade those that are concern'd to have recourse to them for fuller Instructions, than can be contained in so narrow a Compass as this, and to practise them accordingly, I have my End.

AND I cannot but think, that if School-masters would observe it as a constant Rule, to recommend or to put some short treatise of this kind into the hands of Young Gentlemen, upon their leaving them and first going out into the World; or if Parents took care to do it; we should quickly perceive as much Benefit by it, in the Improvement of Christian Knowledge and Practice among those of Superior Rank, as the Societies for Reformation of manners have found by dispersing small books, peculiarly fitted to the Capacities and Circumstances of those of Inferior Condition, among them.

A Particular Care of our GENTRY is, I think, above all things necessary, for reasons obvious enough: And if what I have here attempted prove usefull to Any of Them, I shall think my time well-bestowed. And tho' I have occasionally used the words of other Authors, Living as well as Dead, I promise myself their Excuse, for endeavouring to give an Advantage to my Arguments, by Expressions so much better than any I could use of my own Devising: For they must be pleased to find any work of theirs made more usefull, for the furtherance of a Good Design. And may Almighty GOD accompany it with Success.





AN HUMBLE
ADDRESS
TO THE
NOBILITY and GENTRY, &c.

My LORDS and GENTLEMEN,



ADDRESS myself to you in the
Style of Kings ; because my De-
sign is to excite and perswade
you to the performance of those
great Duties, which God, who is
*the King of all the Earth **, requires at your
B hands :

* Psalm xlvii. 7.

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hands: Which being the purport of *his Will*, as he has reveal'd it in his holy Word, will justify me for speaking as in *his Name*. And if I can prevail with you to consider yourselves as his Subjects, I may hope to enforce the Obedience which ye owe this your Spiritual Sovereign, with as much advantage, as any one can press a steady Fidelity and Loyalty to an Earthly Prince, upon those that own themselves His Subjects: Nay and to those that consider their true Interest, I shall speak with as much more advantage, as the Favour of GOD is better than that of Men; and the heavenly Reward, which our Almighty KING offers his faithful Servants, is more valuable than the highest Honour and Preferment, which it is in the power of the mightiest King on Earth to bestow. For of him it may with much more reason than of any of his Vice-gerents be said; That *in the light of his Countenance is Life, and his Favour is as a Cloud of the latter Rain* *.

Now it is a great Encouragement to you to seek the Favour of GOD, this great and Almighty KING; that it is in your own power, under his Grace to obtain it. He is easy of Access, and will give none a Repulse that make due and proper application

* Prov. xvi. 15.



tion to him: He is liberal of his Favours, and takes pleasure in Distributing to All that sue for them: He is not stinted in his Power, but has enough to oblige as many as come to him with Petitions; *for * every one that asketh, receiveth.* He has no Designing Favourites to divert the Streams of his Bounty from their proper Channel, which is Merit: He is under the influence of no Counsels, but that of his own unerring Wisdom and Truth; nor has any ends of Government to carry on, inconsistent with the Preferment or Advancement of any one of all his Subjects. So that it must be your own Faults, if ye do not rise to the highest Honour in his Court, to the Honour of *dwelling in his Presence †*, and of *standing continually before him.*

THIS is an Honour well worth your seeking, because 'tis permanent and lasting; a Privilege which deserves your utmost Care and Diligence to obtain, because the Benefits which flow from it are not uncertain or precarious: They do not depend on the fickle Humours and unconstant Wills of weak and sinful Men, but on the good pleasure of GOD, who is constant and unchangeable; on the gracious purpose of *the Father of Lights, with whom*

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‡ Matth. vii. 8.

† Psalm. cxl. 13.

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is no Variableness neither Shadow of turning *. The Honours and Glories of this World are fading and transient; purchas'd with Difficulty, kept with Trouble, and lost with Regret. They seldom afford the Satisfaction expected from them, and very often cost a Man more in the Pursuit, than their Value amounts to in the Possession. And for these reasons I may very well ask you in the words of the Prophet, † *Wherefore do ye spend Money for that which is not Bread? And your labour for that which satisfieth not?* Especially having so kind an Invitation to *come buy and eat, to buy wine and milk without money, and without price.* One would think so gracious an Offer should not be rejected, and that the great Value of those good things, which your heavenly KING has laid by in store for those that will accept of them, should raise your Ambition, and make you aspire to the highest Honour; and that the Assurance and Easiness of obtaining it should make you forego all other Pursuits, and fix your Hearts and Affections, where ye are sure to succeed: Where your Ambition will rest on a Throne, where your Desires will be filled with the Beatifick Vision, and your Endeavours crown'd with an Eternity of Happiness,

WERE

? James : 17.

† Isaiah ly. 1, 20

WERE I to *Speak with the Tongue of an Angel*, I could not give you any adequate Description of this Happiness; because 'tis above the Comprehension of any Human Understanding; St. Paul having told us that it is such as *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it enter'd into the heart of man to conceive* *. Our Conceptions are too gross, to *ascend up into Heaven*; Our Faculties too weak, to bear the Brightness of the *Glory that shall be reveal'd*: And therefore the Scriptures represent it only in general terms, and in such language as men dwelling in Bodies of Flesh, and conversing with gross and material Objects may understand; not strictly suited to the Nature of the thing, but to the Measure of our Capacities: Comparing it with such things, as are likeliest to gain most of our Esteem and Value here below; such as the Glories of a *Kingdom*, the Splendor of a *Crown*, the Joy of a *Marriage-Supper* or *Feast*, and the like: Which, though they fall infinitely short of that Happiness which awaits us hereafter, must however be allowed sufficient to raise our Hopes, to excite our Desires, to move our Affections, and to encline and influence our Wills, to Do and Suffer all that may be necessary to secure so great a Treasure and Reward.

And

* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

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And when we are told of *eating and drinking at Christ's Table in his Kingdom **, of *feeding in good and pleasant Pastures †*, of *Rivers of Pleasure*, of *beautiful Dwellings*, *magnificent Cities whose Sun never sets*, and *whose Light is sevenfold ||*, as the *Portion and Inheritance of the Saints* : When we are told, That *they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more †* ; and that *God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes*, that *there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, nor pain **, and that *they shall reign with God for ever and ever †* ; we are given to understand, that we shall be let into the *Enjoyment of all those Delights and Pleasures*, that our *Nature will be then capable of* : And “ That || all the Satisfaction which can possibly result from
“ the greatest Plenty, the highest Honour,
“ the most exquisite Beauty, the most ex-
“ alted Pleasure, as much and more than
“ the most sensual can enjoy, or imagine,
“ or wish for, will be not only equalled,
“ but vastly exceeded in the Happiness of
“ the next World ” : In short, That the *Bliss and Pleasure of our future State will be complete and certain, pure and unmingled, constant and durable, neither sub-*
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* Luke xxii. 30. † Isaiah xlix. 9. || Isaiah lx. 20.
and xxx. 26. † Rev. vii. 16. * Rev. xxi. 4.
† Rev. xxii. 5. || Vid. *Stanhope* on the Epist.
Vol. II. p. 184. 2d Edit.

ject to Alteration nor Decay, exquisite in degree and infinite in Duration, without Measure and without End.

SUCH is the Happiness prepared for them that love God; This the Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us *. And can any of you but be ravished with such a Prospect? Are any of the perishing Glories of this World, worthy to be compared with this exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory? Can any of you that are happiest here on earth chuse but acknowledge, that the Happiness of your present condition falls infinitely short of that which is proposed to your hopes hereafter? And therefore can there be need of words to persuade you, to *set your Affections on things above, not on things on the Earth* †? Or to convince you of the Folly of taking up your Rest, or thinking it good to be here; when ye have a so much better Inheritance prepared for you, in that heavenly Country whither ye are travelling, in the City of the living God that abideth for ever?

Now it is a great Enhancement of the Value of the Happiness, I have been endeavouring to recommend, that the Attainment of it is not inconsistent with the necessary

* 1 Pet. i. 4.

† Col. iii. 2.

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necessary pursuit after, or the reasonable Application to the things of this life; nor yet with any of those innocent Enjoyments which are manly and rational, and therefore can be of use to sweeten the labour of our Pilgrimage thro' the World.

1. IT is not inconsistent with the necessary and reasonable Application to the things of this Life. And this I mention because, tho' the easiness of your Circumstances, and the Affluence of your Fortunes to whom I am speaking, is supposed to exempt you from that Pains and Labour which those below you must take, for their Support and Maintenance; yet is there some worldly Business appointed for you to employ yourselves in: No man whatsoever was sent into the World to do nothing, or to *take his Pastime therein*, like the *Leviathan* in the deep; but every one has his proper Vocation allotted him to attend upon, according to the Difference of mens Capacities and the Diversity of their Conditions; insomuch that the greatest of the sons of men, who are the farthest removed from Want or Dependance, (have not the Privilege, shall I say? or rather) are not laid under the Curse of being Idle: They have something to Do; they must find themselves some Employment; which is so necessary even to the continuance of their Worldly Prosperity, that whosoever they

they are that give themselves up wholly to the pursuit of their Pleasures, and squander away their time in Sports and Diversions, will at last find by the sensible Decay of their private Fortunes, that Idleness *was not made any more than Pride for Man.*

Now this I say, that our Heavenly Call and our Earthly are not inconsistent one with the other: You may secure the Happiness of another Life, and yet apply yourselves as much as is necessary to the Affairs of this. For the way and means to obtain the Kingdom of God, which is the Happiness I am urging you to seek after, is by holy and virtuous living; by a conscientious care to perform the religious Duties, which Almighty God requires of you; that is, by *living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world*: If ye be but careful to *keep these Commandments*, ye are sure to *enter into life* *. Now ye may generally do this, without any hindrance to your Temporal Interest; and ye may promote and set forward your present, at the same time that ye are providing for your future Happiness. For whilst you are employed in business proper for you, and do not neglect the Exercise of those Virtues, which are required of you respectively in your Stations: As long as ye are making pru-

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* Matth. xix. 17;

dent and reasonable Provision for this Life, without Forgetfulness of the other; as long as ye *use this World, without abusing it*, being careful to maintain a constant Sense of Religion in your minds, and to express the same at all reasonable times in solemn Acts of Piety and Devotion; it cannot be doubted but ye are serving God very acceptably, and consequently doing that which will turn to your future as well as your present account.

ONLY let it be remember'd, that as ye have more leisure and Opportunity to attend the Business of Religion and the Concerns of your Souls, than such as are in meaner Circumstances; so there will be more expected from you, a greater degree of Virtue in proportion to your greater Capacities and Opportunities; an Improvement answerable to the Number of your Talents: and as you are indebted for larger Receipts than those beneath you, so are ye accountable for a larger Increase. And therefore being exalted in Honour and Authority above your Brethren, it concerns you to distinguish yourselves, by the greatness of your Zeal for the Service of that heavenly Master, who has so graciously preferred you; and to study to excel others, as much in every thing that is good and praise-worthy as ye do in Rank and Place; being always mindfull of that most just and
righteous

righteous Rule, by which the Accounts of all God's Stewards will be examin'd and try'd at the last Audit; that *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required*, Luke xii. 48.

BUT then for your Encouragement it is to be consider'd, that if your Work be great, so also is your Reward: And as the temporal good things which ye enjoy, are an Advantage put into your hands, by which you may greatly increase your future Happiness; so to those that use them aright, they are as it were an Earnest and Pledge thereof. A marvelous Instance of God's Favour and Goodness this! That the Blessings of your present condition should give you an occasion, to *lay up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that ye may lay hold on Eternal Life*; † and that there should be so close a Connexion between your Duty and your Happiness, both here and hereafter: And give me leave to add, That the surest way to secure your Eternal Interest, is by the Exercise of those Virtues that are the likeliest means of promoting your Temporal; for that a truly Christian will always be found to be the Happiest Life, consisting in the Discharge of the Duties of Sobriety and Temperance, Chastity and Humility, Meek-

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† 1 Tim. vi. 19.

ness and Patience, Justice, Charity and Peace. In the Exercise of these Virtues and such like, does the Nature of true Religion consist, and a good part of the present Reward of it; neither can ye any other way so effectually consult your present and future Interest both at once: And for this reason *Solomon*, recommends Religion under the name of Wisdom, as that which is attended, at least ordinarily speaking, with Temporal Happiness, besides the Title it gives men to that which is Eternal. *Happy*, says he, *is the man that findeth Wisdom, and the man that getteth Understanding; For the Merchandize of it is better than the Merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold: She is more precious than Rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her: Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand Riches and Honour*, Prov. iii. 13, 14, 15, 16. To all which he adds, as a further Enhancement of the Value of this heavenly Wisdom, v. 17. *That Her ways are ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace*: Which is a proof of what I before observ'd,

2. THAT the Attainment of that Eternal Happiness which is prepared for Us hereafter, is not inconsistent with any of those innocent Enjoyments, which are manly and rational, or can be of any use to sweeten the labour of our Pilgrimage thro' the

the World: And that because the Means, the practice of those Christian Graces and Virtues, which are necessary to attain that Happiness, are not inconsistent nor do at all interfere with such Enjoyments. It is a great Injury to Religion, to represent it in a Melancholy and gloomy Dress; as if it was an Enemy to all Mirth and innocent Pleasure; and all Worldly Enjoyments were inconsistent with the Christian Profession; or as if every thing that has not a religious Aspect, was a certain Sign of an Irreligious mind: If so; how shall we understand those Texts of Scripture, which tell us that *God's Commandments are not grievous*; that *Christ's Yoke is easy and his Burden light*; that *the fruit of Righteousness is Peace*, and *the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever*; that *Light is sown for the Righteous*, and *Gladness for the upright in heart*; and *great peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them*; and the like? The plain Sense of which Texts is, that Pleasure and Peace do naturally result from a Holy and good Life; that Religion affords the greatest Delight and Satisfaction of mind, does not bereave us of any true Pleasure, which it is fit for Men or Christians to take. And doubtless this is the proper Character of Religion, it invades none of our Pleasures, *Her ways are ways of Pleasantness*; and it is a great mistake to think, that it will bereave Us of the Sweets
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of Converse, and doom us to an absurd and perpetual Meiancholly; that we must put off Humanity, when we put on the Yoke of CHRIST; that we cannot please GOD without displeasing and tormenting our selves: No; this is a false Representation of Religion, and painting her in Colours which do not belong to Her. We may certainly be Serious without being Morose, Religious and yet Chearfull, Virtuous and yet Pleasant, *Merry and yet Wise* in a Christian Sense: For the Laws of Christianity do not abridge us of any Pleasure, that a wise man can desire and safely enjoy; and if it forbid any that will prove destructive to our Happiness, any Pleasure that concludes in Sorrow, any Enjoyment falsely so called that ends in Pain and Misery; this is what ought to recommend it to your Choice and Esteem.

WHEREFORE let not any false Notions of Religion in Speculation, discourage you from making Trial of it in Practice. Do not be affrighted from coming near and examining her, because she may have been misrepresented, or painted in an uncomely or frightfull Dress: For, believe me, she is comely and beautifull to behold, very lovely and inviting when seen in a proper Light. *Wisdom*, as the *Wise-man* says, † *is glorious*
and

† Wisdom vi. 12. and vii. 10, 29. and viii. 16, 17, 18.

and never fadeth away; she is more beautifull than the Sun, and above all the Order of Stars; the Light that cometh from her never goeth out; great Pleasure it is to have her Friendship, and to be allied unto her is Immortality; Her Conversation hath no Bitterness, and to live with her hath no Sorrow but Mirth and Joy. Religious Wisdom recommends itself to your Affections, by stooping to the Infirmities of your Nature, and giving you liberty to indulge every rational and manly Pleasure, such as does not bring any Torment or Sorrow with it or after it. And therefore all such Diversions as are not unbecoming Men and Christians, in kind or degree, you may safely follow; all such Exercises as are conducive to your health, you may freely use; nor are ye forbidden any of the Recreations, that are proper to relieve and cheer the mind: In short, you may be very Good men, and yet appear in Dress, in Garb, in Look, in common Discourse and Conversation, &c. just as other men do; you may put on all the necessary Gravity of a good Christian, and yet retain the Mirth and Pleasantness of a good Companion.

AND now what can be more said to the Advantage of Religion, than that taking all things into consideration, the Interest of your Bodies and your Souls, of the present and the future, of this World and the other; It is the most reasonable and Wise, the most com-

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compendious and pleasant course that ye can take, in order to your own Happiness. This is what ye all profess to seek; and sure there should not need many words to persuade you, to take the readiest way to obtain it. *He that followeth me, saith our Blessed SAVIOUR, shall not walk in Darkeness, but shall have the Light of Life, John viii. 12.* The way itself is very pleasant and delightful; but the benefit of such a Guide cannot but reconcile us the better to it; of a Guide that is Himself *the Way, the Truth, and the Life* *. If you will be guided and directed by him, he will teach you that way of saving Truth, which leadeth unto Life Eternal. Which, tho' it consists in a Variety of Particulars, and may seem long and tiresome to such as have not yet enter'd upon it, yet to those that are engaged in it will be found short and easy, and greatly alleviated by the Conversation of your Guide, and the secret Comforts he will breath into your Souls; by the inward Peace and Joy that will refresh your minds, and by the *strong Consolation of Hope*, which *as an Anchor of the Soul* will keep you fix'd and *steadfast*, amidst all the Storms that surround you: With these Advantages your Journey will be pleasant, as the End is glorious.

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* John xiv. 6.

YOU see, My LORDS, I take the Principles of Religion for granted; I argue with you, Gentlemen, upon the Supposition of your believing the Being of a God, the Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures, the Immortality of the Soul, the Certainty of a future State of Rewards and Punishments. This *Foundation*, I suppose to be *laid ready to my Hands*; and therefore the most that I aim at, is furnishing you with Materials, to carry on the Superstructure of a Christian Life: And if (as I hope) I may conclude, from the Advantages of your Education and Condition, that ye are well grounded in *the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ*; my business is only to persuade you to *go on unto Perfection*, and to consider the great Obligations you are under above others of an inferior Rank, to practise what you have been taught: Adapting my Arguments to your Particular Circumstances, and pointing at those Duties, which are principally required of you, in the Station wherein the good Providence of GOD has placed you; or which the Temptations peculiarly incident to that Station, will make you most apt or likely to neglect or transgress. Give me leave therefore,

I. IN the first place, to warn you of the Danger of entering into Familiarity, or
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having any Society with Atheistical, profane or wicked men. There are, it seems, those who, like Factors for the Devil and after his cursed Example, *walk up and down the earth seeking whom they may devour*; who industriously set themselves to propagate Vice and Irreligion, and under the specious pretence of *thinking freely*, endeavour to instill the most pernicious Opinions into those with whom they converse, in order to undermine the Practice of sound Religion: *Now them that are such, who by good Words and fair Speeches lye in wait to deceive*; it is the Apostle's Advice that ye should *mark and avoid* *. Because *their Word will eat as doth a Canker* †; loosen your principles, dissipate your good Intentions, enter and embolden you in Vice: and therefore their Company should be shunn'd as the Pests of Society that scatter the Plague where ever they come; for their very Breath is infectious, and as dangerous to the Soundness, the Health, and Life of the Soul, as a Gangrene to the Body; which having once invaded a single part of it, quickly spreads and diffuseth itself over the whole. And therefore the Wise Son of Sirach makes it as difficult to *have fellowship with a proud man without being like unto him*, as it is to *touch pitch without being defiled therewith*, Eccl. xiii. 1. And Solomon compares the Danger in cases of

* Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

† 2 Tim. ii 17.

of this Nature, to that of *going upon hot coals, and taking fire into the bosom* without being *burnt*, Prov. vi. 27, 28. And it is St. Paul's exprefs assertion, That *Evil Communications corrupt good Manners*, 1 Cor. xv. 33. And indeed we need go no further than daily Experience, for a proof of the Contagious Nature of Sin, and of the fatal Influence of bad Company and evil Examples, to bear down all the Opposition which the Modesty of a Civil Education, the weak Impressions of Reputation or Decency, or the Checks of natural Reason can make against the ill principles and practices thereby propagated. Here it is that Men are furnished with Objections against God and Providence, with Excuses and Apologies for Sin : Here they learn to ridicule Religion and Conscience, and to dispute themselves out of all Sense and Duty ; *reasoning, as the Wise-man represents them,*
** with themselves but NOT ARIGHT ; our Life is short and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy ; neither was there any man known to have returned from the Grave. For the Breath in our Nostrils is as Smoke, and a little spark in the moving of our heart ; which being extinguished, our Body shall be turned into Ashes, and our Spirit shall vanish as the soft Air ; for our time is a very Shadow that passeth away, and after our end there is no returning.*

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* Wisdom ii. 1-9.

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Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present; and let us speedily use the Creatures like as in Youth: Let us fill ourselves with costly Wine and Ointments, and let no flower of the Spring pass by Us. Let none of us go without his part of our Voluptuousness; let us leave tokens of our Joyfulness in every place; for this is our Portion and our Lot is this.

WITH such false reasoning as this, do the Advocates for the Devil's Kingdom endeavour to keep themselves in countenance, and to beguile those unstable Souls that venture among them. These are the profane and vain Babblings, whereby men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the Faith, resist the Truth; like as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, 2 Tim. iii. 8. I wish I could add with regard to the declining of their Party, what may be safely said on account of the Weakness of their Arguments, That *they shall proceed no further; for their Folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was, v. 9.* But certainly the best way to escape the Contagion of their Counsels and Examples, is to have nothing to do, nor ever to enter into parly with them; but to oppose their crafty Insinuations upon the first Onset, with a bold and resolute rebuke such as our SAVIOUR gave the Devil, when he would have perswaded him to *fall down and worship him, Luke iv. 8. Get thee behind me, Satan.* For if ye give them but the
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least Encouragement, however you may at first think that you abominate their Principles, yet they will be apt to get ground upon you, and draw you in, before you are aware, to have a better Opinion of their evil ways; till from *thinking favourably* ye proceed to *approve*, and at last to *comply* with them in their Impieties: With so good reason does Solomon advise you, *Prov. iv. 14, 15. Enter not into the Path of the Wicked, and go not in the way of Evil men; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away.* Which St. Paul also makes matter of Christian Duty, and enumerates several particular Offenders whose Conversation should be avoided, *1 Cor. v. 11. I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, with such a one, no not to eat.*

THIS indeed is required of all Christians in general, to refrain from the Company of all *disorderly Walkers*, as far as is consistent with our Condition and Circumstances; and where the nearness of Relation or necessary Business, may make it impracticable to withdraw ourselves wholly from them, yet at least to *have no Fellowship* or Communion with them in their Vices: But it concerns Gentlemen to be more particularly carefull in this matter, because

because of the great Industry these Emis-
 saries of Satan use, to make Profelytes to
 their Cause among those, who by their
 Condition and Fortune bear a Sway in the
 World, And if they can by any means be
 inveigled and deceiv'd, will prove usefull to
 carry on their hellish Designs. For which
 reason they practise the Subtilty and Dili-
 gence of the Harlot in *the Proverbs*, plying
in the Streets, and *lying in wait at every cor-
 ner*; nay, and thrusting their heads into
the chief places of concourse, in order to catch
 young Gentlemen at their setting out into
 the World, and to make merchandise both
 of their Souls and Estates: While under
 the pretence of shewing 'em the World,
 they make it their Business to get an In-
 sight into their Fortunes, and (which is
 worse) to initiate them in Vice, and to
*allure through the Lusts of the Flesh, thro' much
 Wantonness* those, who by the benefit of a
 sober and pious Education, are yet unex-
 perienc'd in the Gallantries and Debauche-
 ries of the Age. And if once they can
 prevail with 'em to assert their *Liberty*, as
 they call it, and to act like *men*, to shake
 off the Fetters of Discipline and Fear, and
 the Pedantry of Schools, and to despise the
 Instructions of Tutors and Governors given
 in their Minority; it will be no difficult mat-
 ter by degrees to raise in them a Dislike of
 our Ecclesiastical Establishment, an Indiffe-
 rency for our *Common-Prayer*, and a Jea-
 lousy

lousy of the Power and Authority of the Clergy; And then the way is open, to the most profane Liberties and scandalous Excesses: For this we may safely observe for the Honour of the *Church of England*, as well as the Reproach of her Enemies; that there are few who have been prevail'd upon, by the subtle Contrivances of evil Companions, to lessen their Esteem and to cast off their love for their Mother, but have at the same time departed from that Purity of Life and Sobriety of Manners, they had learn'd and practis'd under her Care and Tuition. For Vicious Principles naturally produce a vicious Life; corrupt Opinions and corrupt Practices are the mutual Cause one of another; Nor can ye, my LORDS and GENTLEMEN, be any other way so easily ensnared into both, as by an Intimacy and Familiarity with those that are already tainted with them: Neither are ye at any other time of your lives so much in danger of becoming a Prey to them, as when ye first enter upon the Stage of the World, before ye are acquainted with the Malice of their Designs, or have had any experience of the mischievous Consequences of giving ear to them, both with regard to your Souls, your Bodies, and your Estates. I doubt not to say, that ye are sure in time to suffer in all these, by keeping bad Company; and I have been the larger in speaking of this Danger,

Danger, and also given it the first place in the Particulars of this Address; because if it be not well guarded against, it will render all that can be said ineffectual, to perswade you to that *Fear of the Lord*, which is the *beginning of Wisdom*, not only of Spiritual but of Worldly Wisdom; as will I hope be made appear under the following Particulars, which I presume to recommend with all Humility to Your Consideration, for whose especial benefit this Perswasive is designed, as being principally concern'd therein.

WHEREFORE as I suppose you to have had a pious Education, and to have receiv'd good Instructions in your Youth, let me prevail with you,

II. IN the next place to put those Instructions in practice, which have been given you with relation to the first part of Christian Duty, *viz.* Piety towards GOD; and to possess your minds with an habitual Fear and Reverence for that tremendous MAJESTY, who governs the World, and is the Dispenser of all the good things which you enjoy; who upon that account may very justly expect, that ye should express this your Reverence for Him these several Ways:

I. By

1. By the constant, and regular Worship of him, both in publick and private, according to the leisure and opportunities he has put into your hands.

2. By the strict and consciencious Observation of the Sabbath-day.

3. By a religious and awful regard to the Holiness of his dreadfull Name.

4. By a reverend and religious Use of all Persons or Things that relate to God, and on account of that relation are sacred and entitled to your Love, Respect, or Esteem. Give me leave to say something distinctly, of each of these Branches of the Duty which ye owe to God :

1. Of the Obligation you are under above others, to be constant and regular in the Worship of that Tremendous MAJESTY who governs the World, according to the greater Leisure and Opportunities he has put into your hands. It is indeed the Duty of every Christian, to pay to Almighty God the constant Tribute of Homage and Adoration ; and as St. Paul exhorts, *Phil. iv. 6. In every thing by Prayer and Supplications with Thanksgiving, to make known his Requests unto God.* Because we are indebted to him for the Gift, and depend upon him

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for

for the Continuance of all the Blessings we enjoy. But the greater and more numerous the Blessings received, the larger doubtless should be the Tribute return'd; and since your Receipts are in all respects greater than those of other men, it must needs be incumbent upon you to make proportionable Acknowledgments. GOD has been pleas'd to exempt you in a great measure from Worldly Cares, and wholly from those Bodily Labours, which to those below you are made necessary for their Subsistence: But this your Vacancy and Leisure was not indulged you, that ye might be idle, or do ill; but only as a greater Opportunity to do good: And if ye have a right Sense of that gracious Indulgence, you cannot certainly but own it your Duty, to spend a large share of your Time, in those religious Exercises, which your worldly Leisure does in a manner point out for your Employment. " For where-
 " as GOD may seem to have limited and
 " confined the poor man's zeal, by that
 " rule of preferring *Mercy* to themselves
 " before Sacrifice to him; he does by ex-
 " emption *You that are rich* from those
 " Necessities tacitly require, that your
 " Devotion swell up to some Proportion
 " with his Bounty towards you; who
 " being freed from those Weights where-
 " with Others are clogg'd and encum-
 " ber'd,

NOBILITY and GENTRY. 27

“ber’d, even Nature itself suggests the
“Expectation of your soaring higher.”*

So that if the most pressing Wants of the Needy and Indigent, will not excuse them from offering up unto the great KING of the World, their daily Sacrifice of Prayer and Praise, in their Privacies morning and evening, out of that scantling of Time which can be spared from Drudgery and Labour: Ye may be sure, that GOD expects a larger Offering from you; that a greater Portion of every day, should be allotted to works of Piety and Devotion; and having so much leisure, that more hours should be dedicated to his Service, and employed in keeping up a constant Intercourse with him in the Exercises of Prayer, Meditation and Reading: And this not only in secret in your Closets between GOD and your Souls; but in your private Families, which should be a kind of Church, and kept to such strict Rules of Devotion, as to make them patterns to those beneath you: As also in the constant and regular Attendance upon the Publick Offices of Religion, whenever Opportunities are offer’d for it; in a frequent Approach to the Holy Table of our LORD, in a stricter observance of the holy Feasts and Fasts of the Church, and an

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* Vid. Gentleman's Calling. Sect. 6.

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exemplary Conformity to the Rules of Decency and Order prescribed in our Liturgy.

UPON these and all other Acts of Religious Worship, it is no doubt the Duty of Persons of your condition and rank, constantly to attend more especially above Others: And this your Duty is also your Privilege and Happiness; and I hope I need use no other Arguments to excite you thereunto, than the Consideration of the Usefulness hereof to the leading of a Christian Life, the Joy and Peace, the Pleasure and Satisfaction that results from it, the great Advantage and transcendent Honour of conversing with God, and holding Communion with him, and having freedom of Access to Him; to make known your Thoughts, to open your Wants, and to acquaint him with all your Concerns. For you cannot but be sensible, that how prosperously soever the Affairs of this World may go with you, yet ye are still but in a State of Dependence; your Health, your Estates, your Lives are the free Gift of God, and are always in his hands to dispose of them as he thinks fit: Neither can ye any other way so effectually secure the Continuance and Enjoyment of all these, as by making Him your Friend, and committing all your Affairs both of Soul and Body, to the Protection, Guidance,

ance, and Blessing of his good Providence, in all the foremention'd Instances of Religious Worship. And tho' these Duties are incumbent upon you at all Times, as ye have Opportunity; yet are they more especially required of you, my LORDS and GENTLEMEN,

2. UPON the LORD's-Day: By the strict and consciencious Observation whereof you ought therefore, as I said, to express your Reverence for the sacred Majesty of GOD. Now GOD has been pleas'd, to appropriate this day peculiarly to Himself: Which he has done however with this gracious Design, of giving Rest and Refreshment both to Man and Beast; and leisure for Spiritual Improvements to those, whose Necessities tie them down all the Week to Worldly Labour; that *the feeble Knees* and weary Limbs may be *strengthened*, and that *the hands which hang down* may be *lifted up* in Acknowledgement of His Goodness, who has indulged them this temporal Rest, both as an Emblem of that Eternal Rest which *remains for the People of God*, and as a Means of obtaining it.

INDEED the Worldly Rest which this day allows, is a Benefit which does not affect you so nearly, as those that are born to Labour: But the Advantages which it brings of a Spiritual Nature, the Opportunity

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tunity of coming into the more immediate Presence of God, of resorting to the *House of Prayer*, and joining with your Christian Brethren in the Publick and Solemn Acts of Devotion, of Hearing God's Word, Receiving the Sacrament, &c. These are Benefits wherein you are as nearly concern'd, as the meanest of your Brethren. And since the gracious Providence of God, has made all your Days in a manner days of *Rest*, you cannot surely but think yourselves under a double Obligation to receive these Advantages with Joy, and to use them with Thankfulness. And therefore it must be your Duty to pay a *constant*, and *timely*, and *devout* Attendance upon the Publick Offices of the Church, and to see that your Servants and Dependents do the same; setting them an Example of Gravity and Devotion in Praying, Meekness and Attention in Hearing, and of a Serious Regular Behaviour all the time that ye continue in the Presence of God.

THESE Publick Exercises, are the principal part of the Duty required on the *Lord's-Day*: But let them be never so duly attended, they cannot excuse you from more than ordinary Acts of Private Piety and Devotion; which when the Publick Duties of the Day are over, will, if discharged as they ought, take up all the Time that can be spared from a Religious
Care

Care of your Families, and your own Necessary Refreshment. So that there can be no Leisure-time to *make* or to *receive* idle Visits, much less [to travel or take Journeys ; which besides their hindring your own Performance of some or more of the Duties before-mention'd, will also engross so much of your Servants time, as to leave them no leisure to spend in the Care of their Souls, which yet are as precious in the Sight of God as Yours. And if you consider things impartially, it must be thought a very great hardship, that those who by their Condition have but one day in a Week to make provision for their Eternal State, should be robb'd of the Benefit of that, by necessary Waiting and Attendance, or doing needless business or frivolous and gentile Errands. It is to be hoped indeed that their gracious Master in Heaven, will make favourable Allowances for the Involuntary Neglects of those that are well-dispos'd, and would serve him better if they might ; but I am afraid those Earthly Masters that are the Hindrance will *not be so excus'd*, but called to an account, for invading that part of their Servants Time which is none of Theirs, and encroaching upon that sacred Rest which God has appropriated to Himself, for the Benefit of those who have but little other time for religious Exercises.

AND

AND this Consideration should, I think, make you scrupulous of putting your Servants, or others that depend upon you, upon any Unnecessary Business or Employment; and induce you to allow them all reasonable Time for private Duties, nay, and to call upon them to be devout and diligent therein: And then if they neglect them, they will themselves only be answerable to GOD for it; especially if you act the part of good Masters of Families, and besides calling them together to teach and instruct them, set them an Example of a Consciencious Discharge both of the Publick and Private Duties beforementioned. For believe me; but why do I say, believe me? Believe the Declarations which GOD himself has made in his Holy Word, that he hath sanctified and set apart this Holy Day for religious ends, for his own Glory and the Benefit of our Souls: And therefore Worldly Pleasure and Diversions, Trifling and Impertinence, are utterly unbecoming you that should be Examples to those beneath you, of your common Obligation to keep the Sabbath-day Holy, in the Strictness of the Command; *not doing your own Ways, nor finding your own Pleasure, nor speaking your own Words* *. For if you that have Knowledge,

* Isaiah lviii. 13.

ledge, and by the Advantage of your Condition are supposed to understand the Nature of Christian Liberty, give a loose to Vanity and Amusements; how shall not your more ignorant Brethren be embolden'd to sensual Satisfactions, and so by your Example to put GOD off with a scanty part of his Day, when the whole is his Due; as if the Piety of the Jewish Sabbath were abated, because the Rigour of it is done away? Or if you that have no such Necessities, but that you may pay Visits and take your Pleasure any of the six days in the Week, cannot find in your hearts to lay yourselves under a Restraint for one Day out of seven; how can it be expected, but that such as have no leisure but one Day in a Week from Worldly Business, should be encouraged to lay hold of That, to pursue those unwarrantable Ends of Entertainment, Gain or Pleasure, which Youth or Covetousness, or Profaneness shall suggest? And so shall the Liberties taken by you, which possibly in some Instances may not be absolutely sinfull in themselves, become unlawfull and dangerous by their being of bad report, and giving Encouragement to *Licentiousness* in other men. Whereas the Authority which your Station gives you over them, should be employ'd to GOD's Honour; in restraining them from all profane Liberties, in exhorting and en-

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couraging your Servants, Tenants, and Dependents to a conscientious Observance of this Holy Rest; and in *provoking them unto Love and to good Works*. Your Care, and Perswasion, and Zeal in this matter would in all probability prevail more, than all the Diligence or the most pressing Exhortation that a Minister can use; because of the great influence which you have over them, and their general Readiness to please and oblige those, that are in a Capacity to make them suffer in their Temporal Concerns: Which tho' no very commendable Principle, yet may by degrees be improved to bring them to a Sense of their Duty. And therefore having so much in your Power, I hope I need use no other Motive to perswade you to exert it, than the Consideration of promoting thereby the Glory of God, and your Brethrens Good: And this must turn to your own unspeakable, because, Eternal Advantage; for St. James assures us, *That He which converteth a Sinner from the Error of his Way, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a Multitude of Sins.* Jam. v. 20. But

3. THE next Instance I mention'd, wherein to express your Reverence for the Sacred Majesty of God, is a religious and awfull regard to the Holiness of his Dreadfull Name. And this will restrain you,
not

not only from all manner of Oaths and Imprecations in your ordinary Discourse; but from lightly mentioning the Name of GOD, or LORD, &c. upon vain and frivolous occasions. For indeed the Name of GOD, every word by which he has been pleased to make himself known to us, is so sacred that it ought not to be taken into our Lips, but upon holy and serious occasions: And He that accustoms himself to use it with as little thought and Reverence, as he does that of his Neighbour or Servant; that makes it a common By-word or Expletive of Speech, and cries *Lord* or *God*, upon every the lightest occasion of Wonder or Exclamation; such a one has but a very short step to the using it in vain, and rash, and common Oaths; And He that swears *vainly*, is at no great distance from swearing *falsely*: For these lesser slips of the Tongue, as they are called, do but smooth the way, and will quickly *increase unto more Ungodliness*.

Now since this is grown so general and indeed fashionable a Vice, I hope you will give me leave to lay before you some of those many Considerations, that are usually alledged to shew the great and heinous Guilt of it; with some of those aggravating Circumstances, which make it more inexcusable in you, to whom this

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ADDRESS is designed to be made, than in other Men; and this from a sincere and earnest desire of serving you in your highest Interest, that of your Souls, in an Instance where Caution and Circumspection will hinder you of no Pleasure or Satisfaction, either of Body or Mind: And therefore I may well hope, that what I shall urge will have its due Weight, and be received with Candour.

Now this is to be said against the Use of Oaths and Curses by any one whatsoever that they are a Gratification to none of our Natural Appetites; they are a direct and immediate Affront unto G O D, and yet afford us neither Credit, nor Profit nor Pleasure; there is nothing to please or to invite, to tempt or perswade men thus to throw dirt in their Maker's face, by bringing him in as a Party, a Witness and a Judge upon every vain, trifling, or perhaps wicked occasion; and haling him down as it were from Heaven to hear and judge all their silly Disputes and Contests, which are below the notice even of a grave man: And this shews the Sin of customary Swearing to be altogether unreasonable and inexcusable, because 'tis causeless; and therefore a Sign of a graceless and wicked heart, and of such Irreverence and Contempt, as would be intolerable in any Inferior towards his Betters.

But

But it would look much worse, for an Inferior to put this Affront upon such of his Superiors, as had been particularly kind and obliging to him; and had made effectual provision for his Happiness. And this, my LORDS and GENTLEMEN, would be something of your Case, if you should forget the Reverence that is due to the sacred Name of GOD, and accustom yourselves to rash Oaths: For GOD has been pleased to distinguish you by his Blessings, and by the Abundance of those temporal good things which he has given you, to put you into a better Capacity of Knowing him; affording you all necessary means for getting a due Sense of the Greatness of his MAJESTY, and of the profound Reverence that ought to be paid him by all his Creatures: And therefore Contempt from you cannot proceed from Ignorance, or want of better Understanding; for you that know so well how to behave yourselves among men, cannot possibly be to seek, what respect and deference is due to the Great KING of all the World, your best Friend and Benefactor. And therefore the Affronting him, would in you be base Ingratitude as well as Ill Manners; Vices both, which I am sure ye would not like to be charged with, because they are so much beneath persons of your Condition and Quality: But this Charge is unavoidable upon those that *accustom their Mouths to*
Swear.

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*Swearing, and use themselves to the Naming of the Holy One *.*

AND now I am speaking of good Breeding, methinks you that so generally value yourselves upon it, should consider the greatness of the Incivility thereby offered to men; because it highly offends and grates upon all sober and considerate persons, who cannot be presumed with any manner of Ease and Patience to hear GOD affronted, and his great and glorious Name so irreverently tost upon every slight occasion. Besides that if we set aside the Considerations, which make the practice of common Swearing offensive and distastefull to religious Ears, it is utterly unbecoming Gentlemen; since it is now grown so common among the Vulgar, that Porters and Draymen, the meanest and most beggarly sort of people are become the most noted and remarkable for it. Now Gentlemen are used to distinguish themselves from those beneath them in other cases by a more refin'd taste of Pleasure, by a better judgment of what is fit and decent, and a greater Delicacy in their pursuits: And therefore one would think they should count it below them, to be in a fashion which every body is in; and to give any countenance by their Practice to those common Blasphemies, which they

they hear every day used by the most despicable of men. They should be ashamed now to take a pride in, or to value themselves on account of a few profane words which are as common and easy to the poor as to the rich, to the fool as to the wise man; or to *follow the Multitude* in a Practice which requires no such great Estate, or extraordinary parts or genteel Breeding, but that the meanest Mechanick, the poorest Beggar, the rudest Clown may, and has got the Knack of doing it as handsomely and cleverly, as the greatest Duke in the Land †.

So that upon this account common Swearing cannot with any manner of Reason be looked upon any longer, as a genteel or fashionable Accomplishment: For it is so far from adorning and filling a man's Discourse, that it makes it look swollen and bloated, and more bold and blustering than becomes persons of Genteel and good Breeding. And I believe it will be readily acknowledged, not only by men of a nice and judicious taste, but by the most corrupt and debauched, that it is no manner of Addition to the Agreeableness of Conversation; that there is no Wit in Swearing, no Mirth in Blasphemy, and consequently that it can be neither pleasant

† *Vid. Bishop Blackall's Sermon, 34th.*

sant to the Ears nor to the Understanding: For that the Expletives of Oaths contribute nothing to the Beauty of a good Sentence or the musical Cadency of the Periods, or the real Ornament of Stile; but an ingenious and facetious Discourse is received with as much applause, when pruned of all unnecessary Excrecences, as that which stands in need of the help of Profaness and a vain Repetition of GOD's awfull name to give it a Sound for want of Sense. In a word, a man may give all fitting proof of a Genteel Education; he may behave himself like a Gentleman in company, without using any modish Embellishments of words without meaning; he may put on the Briskness and Vivacity of a man of Life and Spirit, without sealing every Sentence with an Oath, or pawning his *Faith*, his *Life*, or his *Soul* for the truth of every trifle that he affirms, with a vain and loose Air of Gentility and Complaisance: Neither can there any thing be urged for the contrary Practice, but a senseless and unreasonable Custom and the Power of Example, which those that are Free should one would think shake off, and those that are Wise despise.

If therefore ye would act indeed like Gentlemen, be perswaded to throw off the Fetters of this Vicious Habit, and to assert the Liberty of Reason and Religion
against

against the Encroachments of Fashion and Example; and to approve yourselves unto God, by *giving him the Honour due unto his Name*, rather than unto men, by *following the Multitude to do evil*. You are so much exalted above your Brethren in Condition, that it will be no difficult matter to maintain your Authority over them, without endeavouring to keep them in awe by those *great swelling words of Vanity*; which however they may terrifie into a present Submission, yet do in truth lessen you in the real Esteem of your Servants and Dependents. So that Passion is the worst excuse that ye can make, for those furious Expressions which are the effect of it; because your Station affords you better and more effectual means of governing your Servants, &c. with more ease to yourselves and without any Affront or Dishonour to God; who will be sure very highly to resent the Indignity offer'd him, if every trifling Wrong, or Provocation, or Mistake from your fellow-creatures should make you presently lose all patience, and fly in the face of your Creator, forgetting that he is your Father, and your Master and Sovereign Lord: And that how highly soever ye may be advanced in Rank and Place, yet ye are but as worms in his Sight, Vile by Nature and wretched by Condition; which makes the Insolence of provoking him, by unmannerly Oaths and

Curses as great, as if it proceeded from the meanest of the Sons of men. Give me leave therefore to conclude this Particular, with our Blessed LORD's own Prohibition of common Swearing; for I can alledge no higher Authority to influence your Practice in this matter, *Matth. v. 34, 35, 16, 37.* *But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by Heaven, for it is God's Throne, nor by the Earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem for it is the City of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy Head, because thou canst not make one Hair white or black: But let your Communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of Evil.*

4. THE last Branch of Duty which I mentioned, as expressive of the Reverence which ye owe to GOD, was a Reverend and Religious Use of all Persons or Things that relate to Him, and on account of that relation are Sacred, and entitled to your Love, Respect, and Esteem: And such besides his Day and His Name, which have been already consider'd, are his Word, his Ministers, his House, and every thing else that relates to his Worship.

1.) THERE is a Veneration due to the Holy Scriptures, the Word of GOD, to be shewn not only in the diligent and constant reading and meditating upon them, but

but also in receiving the contents thereof, *not as the word of men*, extremely liable to Error and Uncertainty, *but as it is in truth as the word of God*, the Author of Eternal Happiness, and the only infallible Guide and Conductor thither: In giving the Obedience of Faith to the sublime Mysteries he has therein revealed, and submitting your Understandings to the Belief, as well as your Wills to the Practice of the Heavenly Doctrine he has there taught. And if ye have such a Reverence as this for these Holy Oracles, if ye consider them as the words of the Living God; I need not surely tell you, how unbecoming and profane a thing it is, to use or apply the Expressions which there occur, to an *ill*, or a *vain*, or a *light* Sense in common talk, or to dress out your ordinary Discourse in Scripture Phrase; much more to droll upon it, or to turn the sacred Story or Doctrine into a Jest: I suppose you secured against this Degree of Profaness, by pious Dispositions and Inclinations; and therefore give me leave only to advise, that whenever you take the Holy Bible into your hands, ye would do it with other Sentiments and Apprehensions, than when ye take a common book; considering that it is the word of GOD, the Instrument of your Salvation if used as it ought, or upon your Abuse of it, the Promoter of your Ruin and Destruction. And these Considerations

rations cannot surely but preserve it, from being ever put to any common, much less a dishonourable or vile use; and make you treat it at all times, with that sacred Respect and Reverence which is due to Almighty GOD it's Divine Author, who *hath magnify'd his Word above all his Name.* Psal. cxxxviii. 2.

2.) THERE is a Respect and Reverence due from you to GOD's Ministers, on account of the relation they bear to him. For if the Servants of an Earthly Prince, are for that reason entitled to Honour and Respect; how much better is *Their* Claim to Honour, who are the immediate Servants of the King of Kings and *Stewards of his Household*; who are the Ministers of the *Word of Reconciliation*, and *Ambassadors for Christ*, entrusted with the gracious Dispensation of reconciling Sinners unto GOD? And certainly the Office which, besides it's empowering them to act *in Christ's stead*, conveys such mighty Benefits to your Souls, will readily be allowed to derive *double Honour* upon the Head of them that bear it. Let me therefore intreat you to consider by whom they are sent, and if you have any regard for their Master, as I am persuaded ye have, you cannot surely Neglect the Servants; but give that proof of your Esteem, which St. *Paul* requires in so many places of his Epistles, by Kindness and Love, Civility

Civility and Respect to their Persons, and a dutifull regard to their Sacred Employment and Authority ; by encouraging their Labours and affording them an Honourable Maintenance, especially where there is not any sufficient stated Provision for them : Which is a Duty more particularly incumbent upon you, if the Portion that was allotted them in former Ages be swallowed up in your Estates. But I need not say any thing more of this matter here ; there being a Treatise already extant purposely written concerning it, which therefore if you please you may consult. * Give me leave only to add and to beseech you, that if ye are so happy as to have received your Patrimony, without the Curse of a Sacrilegious Entail, ye would make conscience of Defrauding or unjustly quarrelling with those, whom the Laws of GOD and of the Land have given a right to the Tithes of what ye possess ; and that ye would pay them all such Dues as they have a rightfull claim to, with cheerfulness and willingness ; in confidence of the Blessing which GOD has promised to pour upon you, by the Mouth of Solomon, Prov. iii. 9, 10. *Honour the Lord with thy Substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine Increase ; so shall thy Barns be filled with Plenty, and thy Presses shall burst out with new wine :* And of the Prophet, Mal. iii. 10. *Bring ye all the*

* Vid. *Sacrilege a National Sin.*

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the Tithes into the Store-house, that there may be meat in mine House; and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the Windows of Heaven, and pour you out a Blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And all these Fruits of your Love to them that rule over you in Spiritual matters, are I apprehend comprized in that one Precept of the Apostle, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. We beseech you, Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake.

So that an insolent and contemptuous treatment of the Clergy, for which this Nation and Age is so shamefully remarkable above others, is by no means reconcilable with the Piety and Humility which becometh Christians; or even that good Breeding, which might be well expected of Gentlemen: And therefore They may well complain of a peculiar hardship, if neither their sacred Function, nor their Ingenuous Education can obtain that regard which either of them singly entitles them to. But,

3.) THERE is a Reverend Regard and Respect due from you to GOD's House, and every thing else that relates to his Worship, to every place at any time consecrated to a Holy Use, to the Vessels, Utensils and Garments appropriated to sacred Administrations

ons under the Gospel, as well as there was to those under the Law : Nor can the Abuse of any of these in former Ages by Superstition, justify those that abuse them in this by Profanefs; or exempt those from the Guilt of Sacrilege who turn Popish Chapels into Stables, or apply to any common use such Things as God has once accepted for His : as appears by the Example of *Belshazzar*, in the Book of *Daniel* *; and of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, in the Book of *Macca-bees* †; and of the *Jews* in our Saviour's time, whom he charges for a reason of this kind, with *making his House a Den of Thieves* ‡. For tho' the most High dwelleth not in Temples made with hands; yet since he vouchsafes a more peculiar Presence there than in other places, and since there is an Honour paid him in every Sacred Dedication, he cannot but expect ye should give proof of your Reverence for his MAJESTY, by your honourable regard to every thing that bears a Relation to him. And therefore I cannot but think it a very becoming Instance of your Piety and Devotion to lay out some of your wealth, in making provision for the more decent Administration of the Offices of Religion, and in supporting and beautifying the House of God, which is seldom grudged for the adorning or beautifying your own: And this

* Dan. v. † 1 Mac. vi. 12, 13. ‡ Matth. xxi. 13.

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this it is to be hoped would be sufficient warrant, for you to join with *Nehemiah* in the Prayer which he makes to GOD, in humble confidence in the Divine Favour, on account of his Zeal upon the like occasion. *Neh. xiii. 14. Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out the good deeds that I have done for the House of my God; and for the Offices thereof.* This is the way to bring down the Blessing of GOD upon your Persons, your Families and Estates; and if you take care to testify your Reverence for his glorious MAJESTY, in all the Instances wherein he requires it, to entitle yourselves to the Promise which he has made, *1 Sam. ii. 30. Them that honour me I will Honour.* And this may suffice for that part of your Duty, which ye owe to GOD. Give me leave now,

III. To descend to the second great Branch of Christian Duty, which is that ye owe to your Neighbour; of which I shall speak only under these four Particulars, *viz.* Justice, Humility, Meekness and Charity. And,

I. JUSTICE is a Duty which ye owe to all men: And herein ye cannot certainly be wanting, if ye observe that golden Rule laid down by our Blessed Saviour as the Sum of the Law, and the Prophets, of *Doing to all men as ye would they should do unto you*

you *. For this will keep you from taking the Advantage of your Condition, to oppress or any ways deal hardly by your Brethren, in any of those Particulars wherein they depend upon you. This will induce you to make *exact*, and *quick*, and *punctual* payments, to those that serve you in the way of Trade; It will make you carefull to give the Labourer his Hire in due Season, that *the needy eyes do not wait to long*; and look so far into your own Affairs, as not to give those that are employed under you an Opportunity to *beat their fellow-servants*, or to use their Inferiors ill; contrary to your own kind and just Intentions to all with whom you are concern'd. Were there any room to think you guilty of Injustice in any such Instances, I might urge the Danger of it in the words of St. James, Jam. v. 4. *Behold the Hire of the Labourers which have reaped down your Fields, which is of you kept back by Fraud, crieth; and the Cries of them which have reaped, are entred into the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.* But it may suffice to observe, as you are Gentlemen, how great a Scandal and Disgrace it is to be in Debt; how many severe Reflections it will occasion being cast upon you, by those beneath you; how much it will lessen your Interest and Esteem among those, whom you will be desirous to lead and govern in temporal matters, and so make you incapable of doing that Service to your Country, which is expected from

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men of your Quality and Estates. So that if you have any regard to your own Credit and Reputation, setting aside the Considerations of Religion, you will be forced to be Just, to preserve your Authority over those beneath you. But for the more effectual obtaining of this end, I cannot but add,

2. THAT Humility is no less necessary than Justice: For if from the Superiority of your Station and Condition, you take occasion to treat your Inferiors with Scorn and Disdain; if you carry it haughtily and contemptuously; those that are despised will be apt in their turn to despise you, and lay hold of any Opportunity that offers, to shew you how highly they resent your proud, arrogant and supercilious behaviour: For every man, how mean soever he may be in Condition, sets a Value upon himself, and loves to find some Respect and Civility paid him by those above him; wherein if they are wanting, they are not secure from receiving an ill turn from the most despicable Instrument; or that the weakest and meanest of the Sons of men will not find means to *bite* their heel, if they think to *trample* him under their feet. And therefore did ye propose nothing else but the good-will, Respect and Veneration of your Inferiors, the best and most likely way to procure that, is by Courtesy and Affability, Humility and Condescension: An obliging Behaviour is sure to win their hearts, and to give you that Power and

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Influence over them, which is lost by rough, or strange, and haughty Carriage. But since I am addressing myself to Christians, I may be allowed to put you in mind of the Obligations of that Character; and how strictly incumbent it is upon those that profess themselves the Disciples of CHRIST, to tread in the steps of their Blessed Master, and to copy after the Pattern of Humility which he has set them, *in lowliness of mind each esteeming other better than themselves.* And if *this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus **, I need not spend time in urging the Obligation of his Command, or the Authority of his Example to *go and do likewise*: But the Consideration of his *being in the form of God*, and yet *humbling himself* so exceedingly for your sakes, cannot but prevail with you to exercise all those Acts of Condescension and Humility, which your Master and Saviour having exercised before you, has made it honourable to follow him therein; as it is the surest way to obtain that Honour which cometh from God, who hath expressly told you by his Son, *Luke xiv. 11.* That *he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* But if the Command and Example of CHRIST have any Authority, I must add as a further Degree of Christian Perfection, the Obligation ye are under,

3. To Meekness as well as Humility of Behaviour, towards those with whom ye

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* Phil. ii. 3, 5.

have to do. *Learn of me*, saith our Blessed LORD, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Matth. xi. 29. and St. Paul joins both together, Col. iii. 12, 13. *Put on therefore as the Elect of God, Holy and Beloved, Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of mind, Meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any even as Christ forgave you so also do ye.* Which he also requires of the Ephesians, as the proper Badge of the Christian Vocation, Eph. iv. 1, 2. *I beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering forbearing one another in love.* Now if these Virtues have their due effect upon your minds, they will dispose you to be mild, and gentle and patient toward all men; to do no man any Injury, nor to give any Affront, but to take them without fretting or Impatience; to keep the Mastery of your Passions, and never to fly out into any undecent or unseemly Language or Behaviour, even upon the highest Provocations: They will preserve you from seeking to *Avenge yourselves*, or giving way to any *unjust, or hasty, or unreasonable, or immoderate Anger*; so as to discompose or disorder yourselves, or to become troublesome or injurious to Others. In a word, the Virtue of Meekness if you are really possess'd of it, will restrain you from all Peevishness and Frowardness of Spirit, contrary to that sweetness of Temper and Disposition which is not easily provoked;

voked; from all unseasonable and intemperate Anger, contrary to that Gentleness of mind which *doth not behave itself unseemly*; and from every Desire or Act of Revenge, contrary to that Christian Charity which *is the fruit of the Spirit, which suffereth long, beareth all things, endureth all things*. And did you calmly consider the present and temporal Inconveniencies, as well as the future Punishment of Ungovern'd Passions; how great the Vexation and Uneasiness of mind is which they produce, and how many great Sins they lead men into, indisposing you to take any Satisfaction in your State and Condition, and raising a Hell within your own Breasts, to the Destruction of that Peace and Tranquillity of Mind which is necessary to your Happiness; I should not want many Arguments to perswade you to follow the Psalmist's Advice, Ps. xxxvii. 8. *Cease from Anger and forsake Wrath, fret not thyself in any wise to do Evil*. The Danger of being thereby *moved to do Evil*, and being hurried into those Extravagancies, which in your cool thoughts you cannot but condemn, would make you keep a strict guard over your own hearts, and to overcome and master your Passions, which in the Judgment of Solomon is a greater Instance of true Valour and Fortitude, and a juster ground of glorying, than 'tis to overcome by force the most powerfull Enemies: For so we are taught, Prov. xvi. 32. *He that is slow to Anger is better than the Mighty, and he that ruleth his Spirit than he that taketh a City*. HENCE

HENCE therefore ye may take an Estimate of the Guilt of Duelling, so common in these days, to the Detriment of the Publick, as well as the Ruin and Destruction of private Families; whereby we have seen so many Gentlemen fall a Sacrifice to Private Revenge, and hurried into another World before their Time, under the Guilt of their own Blood and thirsting after, if their hands were not actually embrued in that of their Brother. Now this is a Practice which directly tends to the Dissolution of all Society and Government, as it makes the Publick Justice of a Nation useles and Insignificant: For if every man may be a Judge in his own Quarrel, and take upon him to do himself Justice (as he calls it) for the real or suppos'd Injuries that he receives; if every one that thinks himself grieved, may presently have recourse to his own Sword, for the Punishment of the Offender; I may ask the Question which the Apostle puts upon another occasion, *Wherefore then serveth the Law?* Or to what purpose hath God appointed the Civil Magistrate, to be the *Minister of the Vengeance which belongs to him to repay, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil?*

It will easily be allowed, that the Law has made Provision against every Wrong that is Real or Considerable, whereby one man may injure another; and if any such be offered, you may have recourse to that,

that, and so obtain Legal Satisfaction: But if the Damage be such as the Law takes no Notice of, and allows no Satisfaction for; this is an Argument that it is very light and inconsiderable, and such as will not bear you out for endeavouring to repair it by private Combat. And tho' the Law, or rather Judges and Juries, be commonly so favourable to those that shed Blood in this manner; as not to call it, or punish it as Murder, but Manslaughter; yet it ought to be consider'd, what Judgment will be pass'd upon it in the great Tribunal of CHRIST, and what answer you can make when ye come to appear before GOD's Judgment-Seat, for invading His Prerogative who hath said, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay*, Rom. xii. 19. For certainly if you consider yourselves as Christians, you cannot be to learn how contrary this Practice is to the Christian Law of Charity, and how utterly irreconcilable with that mutual Love, and Forbearance and Forgiveness, which CHRIST requires of his Disciples; and consequently how inexcusable it will be found in the last Day.

BUT I may add, that it is no more consistent even with common Prudence: For those that think it worth their while, to hazard their own Lives or to attempt their Neighbours, for such trifling Injuries and Affronts as are the common occasions of Duelling, plainly shew that their Passions have got the Ascendant over their Reason, as well

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as their Religion : Since neither the Real nor supposed Damages received, can possibly be repaired by this Means ; and if they could, yet the Satisfaction propos'd is utterly disproportionate thereunto, the Life of our Neighbour being too dear a price for any Injury thereby sought to be repaired. So that for any man to give or accept of a challenge, is what cannot be justified either by the Rules of Christianity or right Reason ; because he would thereby become either actually or intentionally a Murderer, either of Himself or his Neighbour, or both.

I NEED not recount the Mischiefs that by this Means fall upon private Families, in being bereaved of a Parent, a Husband, &c. that should be their Support and Stay : And yet these are greater, than can be overbalanc'd by a Point of mistaken Honour, which may forbid a Passionate or Vain-glorious man to pass by an Affront ; or by the Imputation of Cowardice, which unreasonable men may possibly cast upon such as are unwilling to hazard their Life, and consequently their Soul in the way of private Revenge ; and have so much true Courage, as to despise the Scorn they may expect to meet with for daring to refuse a Challenge, and to be afraid of offending God even under the Reproach of being counted afraid of Men. And as for those that govern themselves by any other Measures, and are influenc'd by any other Fears ; I cannot conclude this Particular with
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better advice, than in the words of Bp Blackall upon the Subject *; "He who will not bear
 " this small reproach, *viz.* the Imputation
 " of Cowardice, rather than commit the
 " greatest Sin, may read his Doom, and I
 " leave him to consider of it, in *Mark viii. 38.*
 " *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my*
 " *Words, in this Adulterous and sinfull Genera-*
 " *tion, of him also shall the Son of man be asham-*
 " *ed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father,*
 " *with the Holy Angels."* And so I descend,

4. To the last Branch of the Duty which I mentioned as owing to your Neighbour, and that is Charity; to be shewn, in a candid and favourable Construction of all his Words and Actions, without making any severe Reflections upon his Conduct, or rashly censuring him for little Miscarriages, or upon slight and groundless Occasions, which is beneath persons of your Condition and Education: In a kind and benign Treatment and Humanity of Behaviour, towards all with whom you have to do, which is the surest way to recommend yourselves to their Respect and Esteem: In a compassionate regard to the Miseries and Calamities that may befall other men, and in a Readiness to assist them in their Distresses, and to relieve them in all their Wants, whether of mind, or body, or Estate: This last is what is commonly and especially understood by Charity, *viz.* *Distributing to the Necessities* of the Poor: And
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upon mention hereof I am willing to hope, the Earnings of your own Bowels are so strong, and that you find so powerfull an Intercessor in your own Breasts pleading in their behalf, as to make it almost unnecessary to use any other Arguments, to provoke you to this Duty. For Who that considers the Poor as Partakers of the same common Nature with Himself, can chuse but be *touched with the feeling of their Necessities*? Who that considers himself as liable to the same Wants and Necessities, which the poor suffer, can be backward to supply and relieve them? Who that considers it as a thing owing to the Indulgent Goodness of GOD, that he is not actually oppressed with the same Wants which the Poor labour under, can be backward in making the Acknowledgments required of him by that bountifull Benefactor, *who made him to differ from another*?

FOR, to use the words of Dr. Moss, *
 “ Tho’ the Poor have no legal demand up-
 “ on the Rich for that which is purely their
 “ free Benevolence, yet they have a right that
 “ is Superior to all human Constitutions: For
 “ they claim under GOD, who is the Su-
 “ preme Lord and Proprietor of the Uni-
 “ verse, and hath purposely so shared his own
 “ Distributions, that the Abundance of
 “ some might be a Supplement to the
 “ wants of Others.

“ AND in strictness of speaking, the man
 “ that

* Vid. his Sermon on Prov. xxii. 2.

“ that in the Vogue of the World passes for
 “ a Master of many thousands, is not the
 “ proper Owner of what he hath; he is on-
 “ ly God’s Steward, and the larger Estate he
 “ hath to manage, so much the greater is his
 “ Trust and Care in the Family: And he
 “ ought accordingly to *give* to every one
 “ *their portion in due Season*, and in full Mea-
 “ sure. Which if he neglects to do, he is
 “ guilty of foul Ingratitude as well as Dis-
 “ obedience to his Lord, and manifest wrong
 “ to his fellow-creatures, over whom he is
 “ made a kind of Ruler. In discharge of
 “ which honourable Trust he ought to be
 “ both Faithfull and Wise; Faithfull, in be-
 “ stowing his Alms according to his Abun-
 “ dance, *giving a Portion to seven and also to*
 “ *eight, nay, to fifty, to an hundred, to more*
 “ *if he can, as not knowing what Evil shall be*
 “ *upon the Earth*, Eccl. xi. 2. And Wise;
 “ in so contriving and managing his Char-
 “ ity, as may make it truly Usefull and Be-
 “ neficial, and as far as is possible (like our
 “ Saviour’s Miracles, which were also Works
 “ of greatest Mercy) salutary at once both
 “ to Soul and Body. He should take care, not
 “ only to fortifie and cloath the Bodies of his
 “ needy Brethren, with convenient food and
 “ raiment; but he should contribute what
 “ he can to relieve their Spiritual Wants; to
 “ supply them with *the Bread of Life that is*
 “ *from Heaven, to cloath them* (as the Prophet
 “ *Isaiah expresth it) with the Garments of*
 “ *Salvation*, to lend Eyes to their blind Un-

“ derstandings, and feet to their lame Wills;
 “ to fashion their Manners aright at first,
 “ or to bring them again to their true
 “ Bent, whilst they are yet flexible; to keep
 “ them from *turning aside into crooked Paths,*
 “ *and to lead them in the way Everlasting* ”.

ALL this, My LORDS and GENTLEMEN,
 your Wealth and Authority gives you the
 Advantage of doing, for the Honour of GOD
 and your Brethrens Good; and therefore I
 hope it is needless to say, you are under an
 indispenfible Obligation to Do it: For *I know*
the Forwardness of your mind; We daily see
 the Fruits of your Bounty in those extensive
 and usefull Charities, which have of late
 Years so exceedingly prevailed, as to justifie
 our *Boasting on your behalf*. Give me leave
 only to exhort you to go on in this Work and
Labour of Love, and as GOD hath abounded
 towards You with the Blessings of his Good-
 ness, so to *abound yet more and more*, in distri-
 buting the same to the present Comfort of
 your Brethren, and your own future and
 Eternal Consolation in the Kingdom of Hea-
 ven. For this is the purport of St. Paul's Ex-
 hortation, with which I shall conclude this
 Point; *Charge them that are rich in this World.*
That they do good, that they be rich in good works,
ready to distribute, willing to Communicate; lay-
ing up in store for themselves a good Foundation
against the time to come, that they may lay hold on
Eternal Life, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19. And
 thus having spoken I hope sufficiently of the
 Duty

NOBILITY and GENTRY. 61

Duty which ye owe to your Neighbour, under those four Particulars wherein I conceive you are most nearly concern'd ; I pass now,

IV. To the last great Branch of Duty, which is that owing to yourselves : Whereof the principal Particulars are these Five, Frugality, Temperance, Chastity, Contentment and Moderation. And

1. GIVE me leave to recommend to you Frugality and a prudent care in your Expences ; that ye do not squander away the Wealth, which the good Providence of God has blessed you with in Sin, or in Vanity, or in Folly : Lest ye disable yourselves from the performance of those Duties, which are peculiarly incumbent upon you in the Station wherein ye are plac'd, and to which your temporal Prosperity was designed to be subservient : Lest ye by Degrees dissipate your Substance, and so bring upon yourselves that Misery and Want, which your present Abundance will make you less able to bear, than such as never lived in Plenty ; Or if your Goods should be enough to last out your own time, notwithstanding your Extravagance, lest ye draw upon yourselves the Curses of your Posterity, for wasting the Patrimony which their Descending from you would have have entitl'd them to ; and leaving them to strive with those Hardships and Difficulties, which your Virtue, and Prudence, and good Husbandry would have freed them from, .AND

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AND verily the waſting of your Subſtance is a Danger not to be deſpiſed, let your Eſtates be never ſo great ; as appears by thoſe Multitudes of Examples, whom Extravagance hath reduc'd to a very ſtrait Fortune, from ample Poſſeſſions : And happy will it be for you, if you are ſo wiſe as to take Example by them,

Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum,

If, when ye obſerve the havock that has been made in other mens eſtates, by vain and wanton Equipage above their Rank, prodigal and idle Gaming, waſtefull Vices, and expenſive Pleaſures, ye take warning not to ſplit upon thoſe Rocks, and be carefull to limit your Expences by your Income ; and from the Senſe of what God expects from you, in the way of Piety and Charity ; your Neighbours in the way of Munificence and Hoſpitality, Your Family and Relations in the way of Kindneſs and natural Affection ; to husband your Fortune with ſo much Prudence and Diſcretion, as to answer all theſe Obligations : So ſhall ye enjoy the good things which ye poſſeſs, without any Diminution to your future hopes : So ſhall ye obtain peace in your own minds, Eſteem and Good-will from the World, and Favour with God : So ſhall ye be free from thoſe Vices, which Extravagance will betray you into, and which I propoſe particularly to warn you againſt, in ſpeaking to the remaining Duties which I mentioned as owing to yourſelves ; Whereof,

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2. THE second is Temperance and Sobriety : By which I mean such a moderate Use of Meats and Drinks, and all the lawfull Pleasures of the Body, as is agreeable to your Condition as Men, and to your Profession as Christians; in opposition to Luxury and Riot, Idleness and Sloth, Surfeiting and Excess : Which are all Vices so destructive to the Health and Ease of the Body, to the Strength and Vigour of the mind, and to the present Welfare and Happiness of the whole Man; that one would scarce think it needfull, to mention the mischievous effects thereof upon your Spiritual and Eternal State, to perswade you to refrain from them. But when both Considerations meet, their being inconsistent with your present as well as your future well-being : When it is consider'd that these Vices fill the Body with Pains and Diseases, enfeeble and weaken the Understanding, and all the Discerning Faculties of the Soul; that they tend to Poverty, Disgrace and Shame in this World, as well as Misery in the next; surely if you would not forfeit your Pretensions to Worldly as well as Divine Wisdom, there cannot want Arguments to dissuade you, from *making Provision for the Flesh to fulfill the Lusts thereof*; from becoming Slaves to the sensual Appetite, or being led away contrary to your own better Judgment and Sense of things, by the Prevalence of Custom, Perswasion, or Example, into Practices that are at once ruinous to your Estates your Credit, your Bodies, your Souls.

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ON the other hand what real Pleasure or Satisfaction is there in Intemperance to countervail these Mischiefs? What Entertainment does the sottish Mirth of Debauched Companions afford, greater than what springs from a temperate and sober use of GOD's good Creatures? But why do I say *Greater*? What real Satisfaction can it afford at all, while it is destitute of Innocence, which is the Spirit and Quintessence of all Enjoyments? For *Solomon* tells us that *the Heart may be sorrowfull even in Laughter*, and the *Mirth* which is attended with Guilt, must necessarily conclude in *Heaviness*:* Whereas the Pleasures of Temperance and Innocence are solid and lasting, neither mixt with Grief nor allay'd by Fear: They leave no sting behind them, but are a perpetual Spring of Peace and Joy in the mind. This is the way to partake of the good things of this World, without forfeiting those of the next; This is the way really to enjoy the Sweets of Life, of Conversation, of Friendship without Bitterness in the End. So that when ye are exhorted to be *Temperate in all things*; when our Blessed Saviour bids you *take heed lest your hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness*; and *St. Paul* to beware of *Rioting and Excess*; You are only commanded to consult your Temporal, in order to the better securing of your Eternal Interest. And indeed this is the Drift of all GOD's Commands, this Tendency, this natural effect

effect have all the Virtues of the Christian Life; not only Frugality, Temperance and Sobriety, but also

3. CAHSTITY, the third Particular mentioned of the Duty which ye owe to yourselves. Now this Virtue, if it have its due influence upon your minds, will restrain you not only from *Disbonouring your own Bodies* * by Unnatural Lusts, such as the Sins of *Onan* † and of *Sodom* †; which were so provoking in the Sight of GOD, as to draw down immediate Vengeance upon the first Guilty Offenders; not only from the greater and more gross Acts of Uncleaness, in all the Branches of it, *Works of Darknes* which it is a shame to mention; but from all Incentives and Motives, from all Approaches and Provocations to Lust, from giving way to any filthy Imaginations or Desires, and from polluting the mind by the Wilfull Indulgence of unseemly Thoughts and Inclinations, where the Shame or Fear of men may lay a bridle upon the Outward Actions: Remembring than None but *the pure in heart* can ever see God*, and that Lustfull Looks and Desires † are no more allowable by the Christian Law, than the filthy Abominations of the Heathens; in that they estrange the mind from God, dispose men for, and lead the way to greater and more heinous Uncleanesses. Now as to these one would think the temporal Pu-

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* Rom. i. 24, 27.

† Gen. xxxviii. 9.

† Gen. xix. 5.

* Matth. v. 8.

† Matth. v. 28.

nishments that follow them, should be enough to terrifie those that consider any thing at all, from every carnal Indulgence; and when they are taught by sensible Examples as well as Divine Admonitions, that Shame and Disease, Poverty and Reproach; that natural Blindness and Judicial Hardness of heart, are the common effects of Sensual and brutish Lusts: When Solomon tells you, that *by means of a whorish Woman a man is brought to a piece of Bread*, Prov. vi. 26. that *he shall get a wound and Dishonour, and his reproach shall not be wiped away*, v. 33. that *however the Lips of a strange woman may drop as the honey-comb, yet she has Malice in her heart and Treachery in her Designs, having cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by her; Her house is the way to Hell, that is to the Grave, going down to the Chambers of Death*, Prov. vii. 26, 27. And when the Truth of all these Observations is confirmed by the Experience of many Martyrs, who have fallen a Sacrifice to Lust before your Eyes; when ye observe *what Desolations Debauchery hath made in the Earth*, one would think there should be no need to repeat the terrible Denunciations of future Punishments, which God hath prepared for it; or to put you in mind of what St. Paul hath said, that *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*, Heb. xiii. 4. *q. d.* He will adjudge them to the hottest Portion of his Wrath; or that St. John reckons up the *Abominable* ἐβδελυσμένοι, those that allow themselves in the grosser

Acts

Acts of filthy Uncleanness, and *Whoremongers* amongst those, who shall be condemned *to have their part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone, which is the second Death*, Rev. xxi. 8.

BUT if you join both Considerations together, and reflect on the present mischievous effects of a lewd and dissolute course of Life, as well as the future Vengeance that awaits it: Who that pretends to be Wise, or desires to be Happy can chuse but fear; and acknowledge the Goodness of God in requiring Us to *mortifie our Members that are upon the Earth*, and to guard against all the Avenues and Approaches, against every kind and degree of Lust? For what pleasure and Satisfaction can there possibly be in the Embraces of a *strange woman*, fit to be laid in the Ballance against the Miseries consequent thereupon? Or what Allurements of present Enjoyment can countervail the *Bitterness of her End*? † Especially since God has mercifully consider'd the Frailty of human Nature, and provided a Remedy against Sins of this kind in the *Honourable estate of Marriage*; that the Looseness and Wandring of Desire may not prove prejudicial to Society, or Particular Persons, and so all may *keep themselves undefiled Members of Christ's Body*.

I might further urge the Guilt and Danger of indulging the *sinfull Lusts of the Flesh*, as they are the often occasion of other Sins;

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But if the Miseries which ye thereby expose yourselves to, both in Body and Soul, in this Life and the next, are not sufficient to restrain you; I am afraid, That Consideration will scarce be more effectual. And therefore I think I cannot better conclude this Particular than in the words of Solomon, Prov. v. 8, 9, &c. wherein he sets forth the Dangers I have insisted on, of having Society with a *strange woman*; *Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her House: lest thou give thine Honour unto Others, and thy Tears unto the Cruel; lest strangers be filled with thy Wealth, and thy Labour be in the House of a Stranger, and thou mourn at the last when thy Flesh and thy Body are consumed*: unto which he adds such Advice, as I hope will the better be received for coming from so Wise a man, vs. 15, 17, 18, 19. *Drink waters out of thine own Cistern, and running Waters out of thine own Well; let them be only thine own, and not strangers with thee: Let thy Fountain be blessed, and rejoice with the Wife of thy Youth: Let her be as the loving Hind, and pleasant Roe; let her Breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravish'd always with her Love.*

4. THE next Virtue I would recommend to you, as no less necessary than the foregoing to your present Happiness, is Contentment: And this will make you easie to yourselves, and to the World; to be pleased and satisfied with your Condition, and to lay hold of the Opportunities it gives you to do good, and to be usefull and serviceable to your Generation.

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This will restrain you from all covetous and inordinate Desires of increasing your Store, inconsistent with the Peace and Composure of your own minds; from all aspiring and ambitious Designs, inconsistent with the Quiet and Tranquillity of other men; and from all such Carefulness and Sollicitude for the World, as may tempt you to defraud or oppress your Brethren. This will make you resigned to the Will of GOD under every Dispensation of his Providence, under every Disaster or Calamity that may befall you; will enable you to enjoy the good things ye possess with Cheerfulness; will dispose you to receive and to use the temporal Blessings, with which your *Cup runneth over*, with thankfull Acknowledgments to GOD, and with Charity and Liberality to Men. Discontent in any condition, is a saucy Arraignment of GOD's Wisdom and Goodness; But in persons of your Rank, to whom *God has given all things richly to enjoy*, 'tis intolerable Pride and Ingratitude; and may justly provoke the Author of all your Mercies to withdraw them; whilst you shew yourselves unworthy of them, by *thinking more highly of yourselves than ye ought to think*; as if GOD were your Debtor, and had not enough consider'd your Deserts; an Opinion favouring equally of Ignorance and Vanity: For the cure whereof give me leave,

5. IN the last place to remember you of the Virtue of Moderation, and to exhort you not to be puffed up with any fancied Excellencies

lencies of your Persons, or the real Advantages of your Condition, as any just ground of glorying in yourselves; but to *think soberly*, as becomes those who are made of the same Clay, liable to the same Infirmities, and descended from the same sinfull Original with those beneath you: That so it may appear, that your heads are not become Giddy with the height of your Station, and that the Affluence of your Fortune has made no bad Impression upon your minds. And if this Virtue *have its perfect Work*, it will preserve you from all Foppish Extravagance in Dress, from all extravagant Vanity in Equipage, from all vain Affectation in Discourse, from an affected Air, and Mein, and Gate in your Behaviour and Conversation; which, as the Son of Sirach says *, *shew what a man is*, whether full of Himself, whether exalted in Opinion as in Rank, whether conceited of his Greatness, of his Wisdom, or of his Deserts; and whether he set any undue Value upon his Earthly Goods; whether he consider the Nature of their Tenure, or the Ends for which they were given him. In short, the Virtue of Moderation (which is doubtless a Virtue if rightly understood) will *cast down Imaginations*, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of God, or of yourselves; will make you guard against the Flattery of Designing Sycophants, will abate and Suppress all those Tumours and Swelling conceits of your own Greatness and Sufficiency, that may make
you

you forget your Dependance upon God, and the precarious Uncertainty of Riches and every thing else that is temporal; And so 'twill make *you know yourselves to be but Men.* In a word, It will teach you to use and enjoy your Fortune, as becometh Men and Christians; according to the Caution given by St. Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 17. *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.*

AND here there is the greater Circumspection and Watchfulness Necessary, because of the great Temptation which your condition administers for Haughtiness and Elation of mind, by the Superiority you have over Others; and of the great Aptitude and Disposition there is in an opulent fortune, to breed the Vices of Pride and Vain-glory, Self-confidence and Sufficiency, which are in a manner the natural Growth of the Soil: For hence it is that men become over-bearing and imperious, Vain and arrogant, insolent and assuming; Qualities which may well enough be expected of Bullies, but are utterly unbecoming Gentlemen, and I believe will hardly be found among those that are really such: The greater therefore should be your Care and Diligence to suppress them, by reflecting upon your natural Impotency and sinfull Deserts, upon the shortness of Life, the Emptiness of Honour, the Slippery hold you have of Wealth and great place, and how of-

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*ten Riches make themselves Wings and flee away.**

And such Considerations may convince you of the Folly, of placing your Trust on that which is so flitting and unsteady, of leaning upon a broken reed, of priding yourselves or *setting your Eyes and hearts upon that which is not.*

This is the Judgment that *Solomon* makes concerning them, after the fullest enjoyment of Worldly Greatness and Prosperity, which no man besides him ever had. Let those that pretend to be Wiser despise his Advice; let those that are Happier disprove the Sentence he passes upon all the *Pleasures and Delights*, upon all the *Labour and Profit* that is to be met with *under the Sun*; ALL IS VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT.

THESE, My LORDS and GENTLEMEN, are the several Particulars, which I thought most necessary to be laid before you; and which I have adventured to press and urge upon you, with all the Deference and Respect due to your Station, as being *especially* conducive to your Happiness here and hereafter. And it cannot be doubted, but what I have offer'd will meet with a favourable and candid Acceptance, in consideration of my sincere Endeavours to serve you in your true and real Interest, how great a Stranger soever I may be to your Persons: For this I may presume upon your Good Nature as Englishmen, and upon your Courtesy and Civility as Gentlemen; and that the several weighty

ty Considerations which have been alledged, to perswade you to particular Virtues, to deter you from particular Vices, will be so far regarded as to incline your Attention and Patience to a word or two more of General Advice: While I set before you the great Obligation you are under to lead a *Godly, righteous, and sober Life*, as ye are Men, Gentlemen, and Christians.

1. As ye are *Men*, it may well be expected, that Ye should answer the End of your Creation; and as ye are distinguished from the Creatures of the lower World, as much by the Capacity of being Religious, as of Reason; so that ye should put the Faculties of your Souls to their proper Use, and employ yourselves in your proper Business: which the *Wiseman* tells you is, to *fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of Man* *. This is his whole Duty, his great and chief Employment, the principal Design of his Coming into the World. And therefore when all the other parts of the World, both Animate and Inanimate, so steadily pursue the Ends and fulfill the Laws of their Creation; what a reproach would it be, if Man who lieth under the highest Obligations to Obedience, should be the only Rebel in Nature, and fall short of the Duty which he oweth to his Maker and Sovereign Lord? With how much reason may I in this case urge the Prophets Admonition, † *Remember this and shew yourselves Men*; shew

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* Eccl. xii. 13.

† Isaiah xlii. 8.

that ye are endued with Reason and Understanding, consider and act suitably to your Nature and Faculties; *bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors*, how much your Duty increases with your Obligations; how justly the Creatures below you may accuse and condemn your Ingratitude, if you forget *God your Maker who hath taught us more than the Beasts of the Earth, and maketh us Wiser than the Fowls of Heaven* †. But then,

2. BESIDES the common Obligation ye are under as *Men*, there is also a peculiar and additional Obligation lies upon you to a Religious and virtuous Life, as you are *Gentlemen*. Upon this account greater things are expected from you than of other men, because you have greater leisure and Advantages to inform and improve your Understandings, to reform and rectifie your Wills, to restrain and moderate your Affections; greater Obligations to Practice, because greater Opportunities of Knowledge; and greater Encouragement to make provision for your Spiritual State, because all Care for your Temporal is superseded, by the prosperous Condition wherein the good Providence of GOD has placed You. And this Advantage you are no doubt indispensibly obliged to improve, not only for your own Eternal and Spiritual Benefit, but also for that of those to whom you stand any way related; by a gratefull Concern for the Honour of GOD your Benefactor, and a tender Compassion for the Souls
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† JOB, XXXV. 11.

of men; exhorting, exciting and encouraging them to the careful pursuit of the *One thing needfull*, and as much as in you lieth, setting forward their Salvation: And this not only by Advice and Admonition, but Example; which will always be found the most prevailing Argument to *persuade Men*, and in you would be more especially subservient to this end, because of the great influence you have over them in Temporal things; insomuch that, if I may use the words of Arch-Bishop Tillotson †, “ The Eminence
 “ of your Rank and Condition renders your
 “ Examples so powerfull as to be able almost
 “ to give Authority either to Virtue or Vice;
 “ People take their Fashions from you as to
 “ the Habits of their minds, as well as their
 “ Bodies. So that upon you chiefly depends
 “ the Ruin or Reformation of manners, our
 “ Hopes or Despair of a better World. What
 “ way soever you go, you are followed by
 “ troops; If you run any sinfull or dangerous
 “ Course, you cannot perish alone in your Iniquity, but *thousands will fall by your side, and*
 “ *ten thousands at your right hands:*” And on the contrary ’tis very much in your power, and I hope in your Wills and Designs, to be the Sovereign Restorers of Piety and Virtue to a degenerate Age. And can it be thought, that where your Power is so very great, you are not under a proportionable Obligation to promote the Glory of GOD and Happiness of

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† Vid. Tillotson's Sermon. 13. of Vol. I.

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Men? Or that, if you do mischief in the World by a profligate Example, this will not enhance the *account* you must one day *give of yourselves to God?*

O! therefore, that you would but consider, what becomes those that are so graciously distinguished, by the kind Indulgence of a Bountifull Providence: How holily and unblameably those ought to walk, who are *set like a City on a Hill*; and have by that advantageous Situation, the means of making their *Light shine* further than other mens. That ye would consider, that even in the Opinion of Heathens, Virtue is the best Title to Honour;

*Nobilitas sola est atque Unica Virtus, **

That true Greatness consists in despising the Vices of the Vulgar, and the best and most commendable way to distinguish yourselves from those beneath you, is by refraining from those Vices and Lusts and Sinfull Passions, by which They are overcome; and by a more carefull and diligent pursuit of every thing that is Good and Praise-worthy: Thus will ye preserve the Dignity of your Station, and shew yourselves worthy of the Privileges thereunto annex'd. To which if ye add,

3. THE Consideration of your being *Christians*, your Obligation will appear to be still greater to answer that glorious Character, and to *order your Conversation as becometh the Gospel of Christ*: And this on account of the mighty Assurances thereby afforded, against
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the Prevalency of your Natural Infirmities and Corruption; by which you are enabled to encounter the Difficulties of a Christian Course, and to conquer the Rebellious Motions of Sin; and thro' the Grace of GOD, which is never wanting to the sincere Endeavours of men, have it in your power to secure that inestimable Reward, *which God hath prepared for them that love him*: An Encouragement which is more than equal to all the Temptations and Allurements of Sense; a Reward far exceeding all the Pleasures and Advantages of this Life, which your Profession obliges you, for the Sake of it, to renounce and forego.

AND this is the more binding because it is your Profession, what you have actually undertaken, and solemnly engaged yourselves in your Baptism to continue in *unto your lives end*. So that there is no *drawing back*, without being false to your Christian Covenant; no departing from the Rules and Duties of the Christian Life, without forfeiting all the Privileges and Benefits of your Baptism, and reducing yourselves to as bad, nay a worse estate, than that from which you were delivered by the Death of CHRIST; I say a worse estate, because there is no other Possibility of Redemption from it, than by the means whose Efficacy you defeat, no other way of escaping that Eternal Death which is *the Wages of Sin*, those dreadfull Miseries which are reserved in a future State for *Covenant breakers*; which according to the Tenor of the Gospel, must be the Unavoidable Portion of

of such as despise the Engagements of their Baptismal Covenant, and persist in their Sins without Repentance. And therefore St. Peter tells us, *it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them,* 2 Pet. ii. 21.

AND now I have mentioned the dreadful Miseries, that are kept in store for the wicked and impenitent in a future state; can there be any occasion to persuade those that believe them, to take the only method that is put into their hands for escaping them, by keeping a *Conscience void of Offence toward God and toward Men*? * Can any one that hears of that *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish*, which GOD has threatned to every *Soul of man that doth Evil* *, want Arguments to persuade him to a *patient continuance in well-doing*? Or can any one that considers the Measure or the Duration of that Wrath, think it any part of a wise man rashly and daringly to run into it, having had warning of its Terror, for the sake of any *Pleasures of Sin for a Season*? *Who knoweth the Power of thine Anger*? is a Question not better to be resolv'd than the Psalmist has done it; for *even thereafter as a man feareth so is thy Displeasure*, Psal. xc. 11. This only we know, that it is terrible beyond our Description or Conception; nor can the *Terrors of the Lord* be set forth in too strong a light: And when we consider the Almighty as he is represented in Scripture,

* Acts xxiv. 16. † Rom. ii. 8, 9.

ture, as *whetting his glittering Sword and making bare his holy arm*, with the Severity of a Judge and Fury of an Avenger, to *repay Recompence to his Enemies* and to *reward them that hate him* *; how dreadfull is the Thought! And if thou shouldst be extreme to mark what is done amiss, Lord, Who may abide † it? Who among us shall dwell with the *Devouring Fire*? Who can dwell with *Everlasting Burnings*? || That Wrath is too hot and too severe, to be born by the stoutest or hardiest of men; but how much less will you, to whom I am now addressing myself, be able to bear it, who have been always used with *Tenderness and Delicacy*, and have never been accustomed to *Hardship*? And yet in *this place of Torment* must they dwell, ever burning and never consumed, that obey *Unrighteousness*, and die under the *Guilt of the Breach of their Christian Covenant*; from the time that *the Wicked shall be turned into Hell*, and all the Nations that forget God *. “ O terrible Voice of most just
 “ Judgment that shall be pronounced upon
 “ them, when it shall be said unto them,
 “ *Depart from me, Ye cursed, into Everlasting*
 “ *Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels*; †
 “ *where their worm dieth not, and the Fire is not*
 “ *quenched*! Then shall appear the Wrath of
 “ God in the Day of Vengeance, which ob-
 “ stinate Sinners through the *Stubbornness of*
 “ *their hearts have heaped unto themselves*;
 “ which despise the Goodness, Patience and
 “ long-

* Deut. xxxii. 41. † Psalm cxxx. 3. || Isaiah xxxiii. 14.
 * Psalm ix. 17. † Matth. xxv. 41.

“ long-sufferance of GOD, when he called
 “ them continually to Repentance. *It is a*
 “ *fearfull thing to fall into the hands of the living*
 “ *God: * Upon the wicked he shall rain Snares,*
 “ *fire and brimstone, storm and tempest, this*
 “ *shall be their Portion † for ever* ” ‡.

To endure the hundredth part of the Misery, which GOD has denounced against the Ungodly is insupportable to Thought; but when all the *Vials* of his Wrath shall be poured out upon them, and when Infinite Power shall exert itself to preserve them from perishing under his Wrath, for the Satisfaction of Infinite Justice: Such a terrible Prospect of Misery and Torment, without ease, without Remedy, without End, cannot surely but make you *exceedingly fear and quake*; cannot but put you upon securing yourselves against, and perswade you effectually to ward off this Danger, by acting suitably to your profession, and living up to the Engagements of your Baptismal Vow, *i. e.* as becometh *Christians*. And give me leave to add,

4. As becometh *Christians* that profess themselves *Members of the Church of England*, which requires all her Sons, suitably to her daily Prayers in the Publick Office of Devotion, to *live a Godly Righteous, and Sober Life*. For if ye have no regard to her Authority and pious Admonitions, 'tis in vain that ye boast your belonging to Her; If ye take no care to practise the several Duties of Christianity, which she so earnestly inculcates and perswades,

* Heb. x. 31. † Ps. xi. 6. ‡ Vid. Commination Office.

swades, agreeably to the Word of GOD; If your Words and Actions are loose and profane, If you swear and blaspheme, pretending great Zeal for the Church; Your Commendation is a Real Disparagement, Your seeming Kindness is a real Disservice to Her Interest, which is not thus to be secured; to her Reputation, which is not thus to be maintained; to her Authority, which is not thus to be established. The best way to do true Honour to your Profession, as you stand distinguished from the Sectaries which divide from Her, is to shew the Power of it in your Lives; by the Regularity and Religious Exactness of your Manners, by the Purity and Holiness of your Conversation: Endeavouring to excel all those, that unreasonably depart from the Communion of our Established Church, as much in all Christian Graces and Virtues, as She excels those Models of Confusion which They pretend to admire; that *so they that are of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no Evil thing to say of You.*

AND NOW, My LORDS and GENTLEMEN, *what can I more say than what has been said?* That Unhappiness and Misery are the common and usual Effects of a Wicked and Unchristian Life in this World, but the necessary and unavoidable consequences thereof in the next; That you cannot any other ways so effectually provide for your present and future Welfare, as by living up to the Religious Obligations ye are under as Men, as Gentlemen, as Christians, and Members of
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the Church of England: And that, whether you consider your Temporal or your Eternal Interest, whether you consult the Advantage of your Reputation, the Benefit of your Estates, the Health and Ease of your Bodies, the Peace and Quiet of your minds, or the Eternal Salvation of your Souls; *Godliness is Profitable unto all these, having promise of the Life which now is, and of that which is to come.**

And if this be true, that a Religious and Virtuous Life is the only sure way to Happiness, both here and hereafter, and that the Precepts of Christianity are really calculated for our Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal Benefit; It might seem like an Affront to Wise and considerate men, to importune them to their Interest, and with great earnestness to perswade them to that which in all respects is so visibly for their Advantage: And if you seriously weigh and duly consider these things; I dare leave you to your Choice, as *Joshua* does the People of *Israel* †, whether Virtue or Vice shall have the Preference in your Esteem and Pursuit: “*Chuse you therefore*
 “*this day whom you will serve, GOD or your*
 “*Lusts, and take up a speedy Resolution in a*
 “*matter of so great and pressing a Concern-*
 “*ment; Chuse you this day: The matter which*
 “*I put you upon is so very safe that it needs*
 “*no Deliberation, and so very necessary that*
 “*indeed it will admit of none. Therefore*
 “*resolve upon it out of hand; To day, while*
 “*it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened*
 “*thro’ the Deceitfulness of Sin.*” THERE

* 1 Tim. iv. 8.

† Joshua xxiv. 15.

THERE are many of You, to whom this Application is designed to be made, in the Bloom of Youth and Beauty; the Pride of tender Mothers, and *the Glory of your Fathers House*; of whom it may well be presumed, that you are not yet tainted with the Vices of the Age: O! what a lamentable Consideration is it to think, that ye should reduce yourselves, by any Sinfull Compliances or Indulgences, to the condition of Slaves? O! *what a deplorable thing is it, that the Prince of Darkness should be Master of so much Beauty, and have such gracefull persons in his Possession* *? Innocence is the Beauty of the Soul, Beauty that will never fade, which will make you the Delight of God and Angels as well as men: O! what a pity is it, that by a course of Debauchery and Sensual Excesses, which the Tenderneſs of Human Nature cannot long bear, ye should at once deface the Image of God which he hath stamped upon your Souls, and destroy the curious Workmanship he hath bestowed upon your Bodies? Let Experience be Judge, whether this is not the common effect of Intemperance, Voluptuousness and Sensuality: And what pleasure can there be in doing Violence to Nature, exhausting your Strength, and making yourselves old before your Time?

DID you therefore but consult the real Pleasures of your present Life, Had you a true taste of earthly Enjoyments; one would think

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* So Bede tells us, Pope Gregory the VIth. bewailed the Heathenism of our Saxon Ancestors.

there should be no need to recommend to you, a chaste and sober and regular Conversation, which is the best way to enjoy yourselves, as well as to make you acceptable to other Men. Noise and Vanity, senseless and ridiculous Talk, will never engage the Affections or Esteem of those, whose good word is valuable: Manly and serious and rational Discourse, usefull Designs and pious Undertakings, are the best way to obtain their good Opinion, and to give them an Idea of your Worth, and to answer the Expectations which the World has of you.

FOR you ought not to forget, that the Eyes of the World are upon persons of your Rank, and that Great things are expected from you, suitable to your Descent and Quality. If you trace the Original of your Honours and Greatness, you will find the foundation thereof to have been laid by men of eminent Merits and great Accomplishments: But if you degenerate from the Virtues of your Ancestors, it is not their Great Names that can screen you, from the Reproach of acting unworthy of your Descent. Their shining Virtues will rather set your Demerits in a stronger Light, than draw a shade over them; and the greater their Glory was for *raising* your Families, the greater certainly must your Shame and Dishonour be for *sinking* them into Contempt, by swerving from their Noble Examples. And therefore the Consideration of the Dignity of your Station, should be a Motive to with-hold you from mean pursuits,

pursuits, and to encourage you to laudable Undertakings; that ye may *be worthy to sit in your Fathers Seat*, and keep up the reputation of Justice, Humanity, Wisdom or any other Virtues for which they were famed.

BUT then it should be consider'd likewise, how great influence your Conduct in this Age of your Life will have upon your future well-being; and that according as you demean yourselves now, you lay the foundation of Happiness or Misery for the remainder of your present time, as well as for Eternity:

“ Do not therefore suffer yourselves to be
 “ cheated and bewitched by sensual Satisfa-
 “ ctions, and to be destroyed by Ease and
 “ Prosperity: Let not a perpetual Tenor of
 “ Health and Prosperity soften and dissolve
 “ your Spirits, and banish all wise and seri-
 “ ous Thoughts out of your minds. ”

GOD has prevented you with the Blessings of his Goodness, to encourage you to serve him the better; but your Tenure is uncertain, your condition frail, and your Life at longest but very short, and perhaps much shorter than you imagine: And therefore you ought before all other things to mind the Business of Religion, and take care so to enjoy your Youth, your Health, your Estates, as to lay a sure foundation for your future and Eternal Happiness.

“ You that are grown up to Ripeness of
 “ Years, and are in the full Vigor of your
 “ Age; you are to be put in mind, that the
 “ Heat and Inconsiderateness of Youth is now
 “ past and gone; that Reason and Considerations.

"ration are now in their Perfection and
 "Strength; that this is the very Age of Pru-
 "dence and Discretion, of Wisdom and Wa-
 "riness: " Now you will give but a sorry
 proof of true Wisdom, if you are wise only
 for this World, and shew your Prudence only
 in the Management of your Temporal Af-
 fairs; while you are careless about the *One*
thing needfull, and neglect the Concerns of yo^r
 Souls and your Everlasting Interest. It will
 easily be acknowledged that *Solomon* was the
 Wisest of men, and if you will regard his
 Opinion, he tells you that Religion is the best
 Wisdom, *The Fear of the Lord is the beginning*
of Wisdom, Prov. ix. 10. " Would you then be
 "truly Wise, be Wise for your Souls, Wise for
 "Eternity; Look beyond things present and
 "sensible, unto *the things that are not seen* and
 "are *Eternal*; Labour to secure the great In-
 "terests of another World, and refer all the
 "Actions of this short and dying Life, to that
 "State which will shortly begin, but never
 "have an end". This will approve itself to
 be Wisdom for yourselves, for your own true
 Interest: But then the Interest of your Fa-
 milies should also be consider'd; and since
 there are very few to be found so intent upon
 the present Enjoyments of Life, as not to have
 some regard for Posterity; very few so un-
 wise or profligate themselves, as not to desire
 to have their Children well improved, both in
 Knowledge and Virtue; you ought certainly,
 for their Sakes, to be very cautious in your
 Behaviour, very strict and regular in your
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Conversation; lest ye entail a Curse upon them, and by your bad Example put them into the way of Ruin and Destruction; *lest* when they see you going before them in that which is Evil, *they learn your ways and get a Snare to their Souls*; For this will involve you both in the Guilt and Punishment of their Miscarriage, will be a dreadfull Aggravation of your Sins here, and of your Torment hereafter.

As for those that are Old, if there be any that are willing to own themselves so; they ought to consider, that the Enjoyments of this World are with them in a manner past; Their Faculties are decaying apace, the Delight and Pleasures of Sense do not any longer afford that gratefull Relish, which they did in the time of Youth: And therefore if they have hitherto been careless of their Souls, and unmindfull of the Duties which God requires of them, they have now no such Temptations or Allurements to invite them to sensual Pleasures, as can justifie them even to Carnal Reason, for putting off any longer that most important and necessary Business; which ought to have been their first and earliest Care, and which must be done very quickly, or else it *had been good for them that they had never been born.* “ For this is the last Opportunity of
 “ their Lives, the only Season they have left
 “ to secure their Happiness for ever. And
 “ therefore it is now high time for them to
 “ begin a new Life; the time past of their
 “ lives is too much to have spent in Sin and
 “ Folly. Your Sun is certainly going down,
 “ and

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“ and near its setting ; therefore you should
 “ quicken your pace, considering your Jour-
 “ ney is never the shorter, because you have
 “ but a little time to perform it in ”. The
 Calls of GOD and Religion are now so very
 pressing and importunate, that they admit
 of no Delay or Excuse whatsoever. Death
 in a manner treads upon your heels, and that
 will determine your future State for ever : O,
 do not therefore run the dreadfull hazard of
 your Souls by any more Delays ; “ Do not put
 “ off this necessary work of reforming your-
 “ selves a day longer ; To day is with the
 “ latest to begin this Work, had you been
 “ Wise you would have begun it sooner ; ”
 ’Tis GOD’s infinite mercy to you, that it is
 not quite too late, that the Day of GOD’s Pa-
 tience is not quite expired, and the Door
 shut against You : Therefore do not defer
 your Repentance a day longer ; but use the
 time that remains with so much Diligence
 and Circumspection and Faithfulness, that
 your late and weak Endeavours may be ac-
 cepted of GOD’s Infinite Mercy in JESUS
 CHRIST ; that so ye may obtain the Favour
 and Protection of GOD in this World, and
 at last arrive at the Blisfull Enjoyment of
 him in the other ; *in whose Presence is Fulness
 of Joy, and at whose right hand are Pleasures
 for evermore.*



F I N I S.